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The office of the Holy  
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# BOOKS

BY

**EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D. D.,**

PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S, CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD,  
AND ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN ORDINARY.



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# REPORT

1891

FOR THE YEAR 1890

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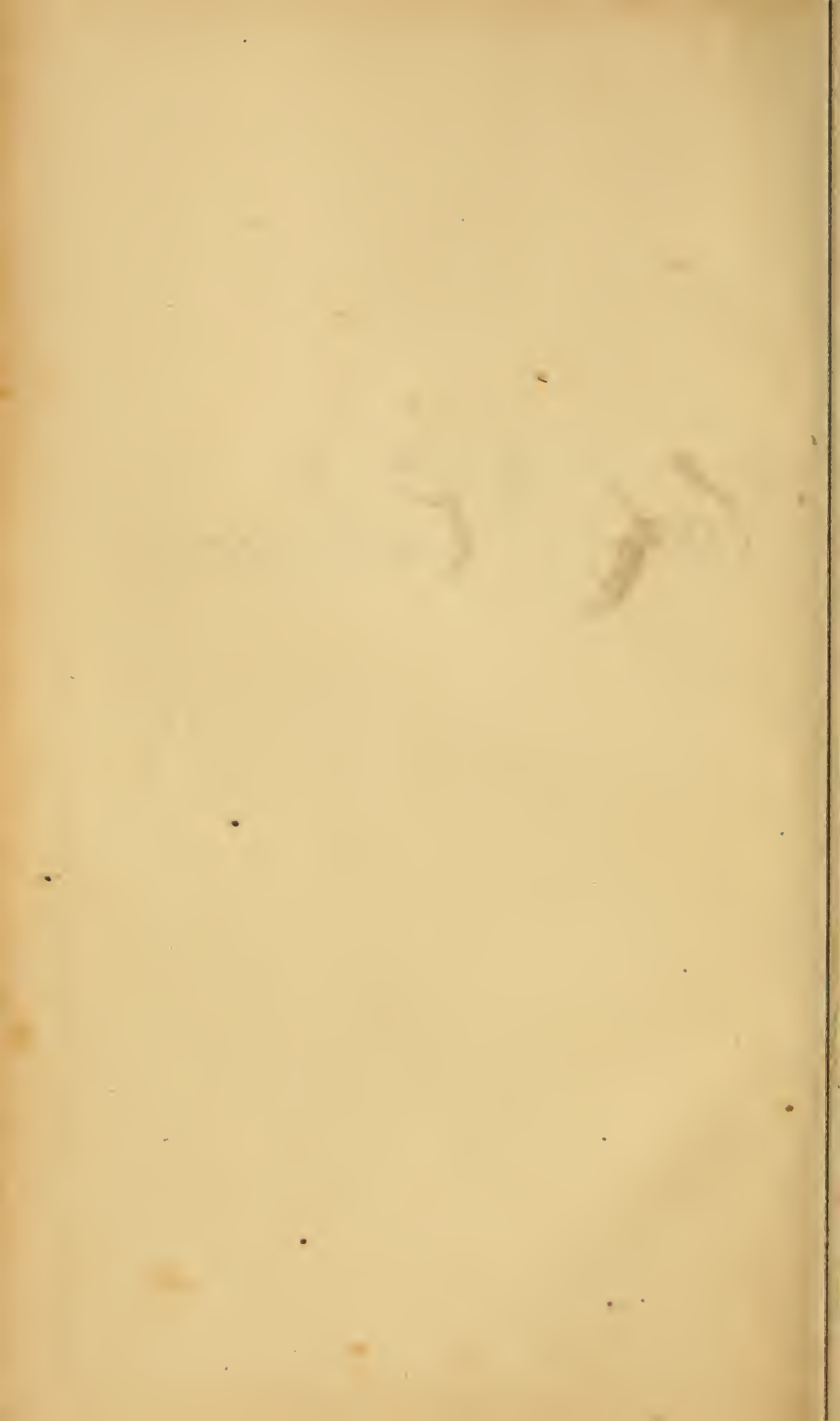
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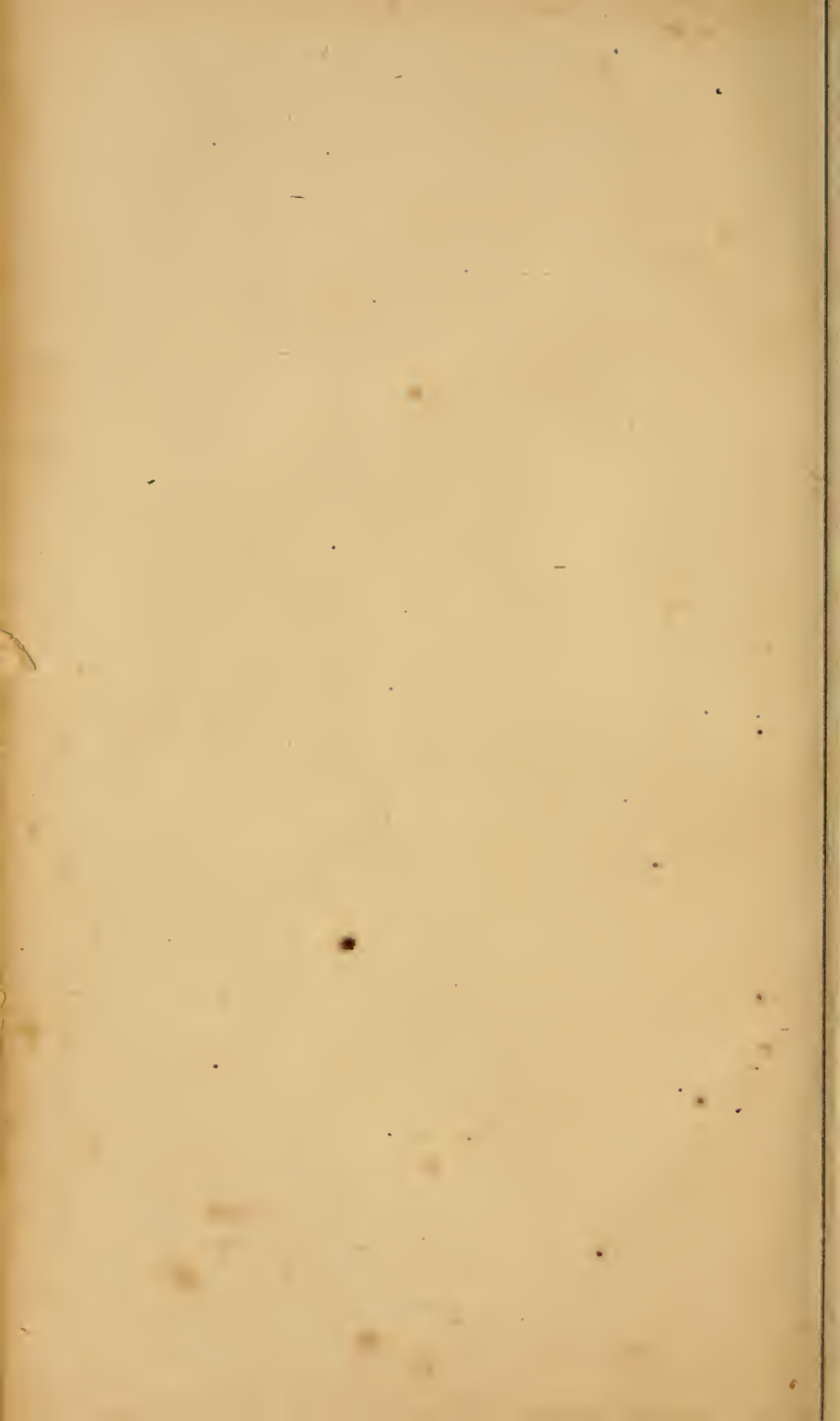
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H. L. de Richmond.













THE OFFICE  
OF THE  
HOLY COMMUNION

IN THE  
BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER;

A Series of Lectures

DELIVERED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, PADDINGTON.

BY  
EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D.,  
PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S,  
AND ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN ORDINARY.

ADAPTED BY THE AUTHOR TO THE COMMUNION OFFICE ACCORDING TO THE  
USE OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED  
STATES OF AMERICA.

NEW YORK:  
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1867.



## PREFATORY NOTICE.

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THE chief design of this little Work is Edification. But in writing on the Office of the Holy Communion, it is impossible to avoid altogether questions of a controversial character.

The Doctrine of the Sacrament must of course be stated and considered in such a work. On this difficult subject I have endeavoured to set forth the teaching of the Anglican Churches, as expressed in their formularies, and represented by their best Divines, repudiating on the one hand Transubstantiation, and all erroneous views holding of that dogma, and on the other Zwinglianism and all views which go to reduce the Holy Sacrament to a mere symbol, and to empty it of its character as the Highest Means of Grace. I have tried to maintain that our Lord's Body and Blood are verily and indeed (and not merely in a figure) taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper, though after a heavenly and

spiritual manner, which (because it is heavenly and spiritual) it is presumptuous to attempt to comprehend or define.

And if in treating of so delicate a subject I have made (on either side) a statement at all unsafe, I desire to retract such statement, and to submit to the authority of the Formularies of the English Church, to all which I give my unqualified assent and consent.

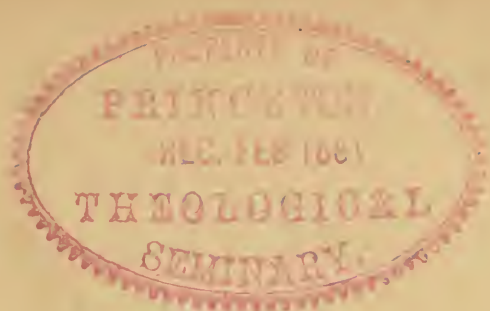
One object of these Lectures has been to point out to my hearers and readers the great beauty and appropriateness of the Office on which I have undertaken to comment, and the large amount of thought, erudition, and piety which underlies it. Almost all the world praise the Prayer Book (even Dissenters are found to do so very copiously), and with about as much intelligence as they show in praising Shakspeare and Milton. If the majority would be honest about Shakspeare and Milton, they would confess that some of the ephemeral poetry of the day is far more attractive, and possesses what seems to them more sparkling poetical beauty; and if the majority would be honest about the Prayer Book, they would admit that they much prefer to its terse and chastened fervour some rambling and diffuse piece of devotion, thrown off on the spur of the moment, without method of arrangement, and of no merit as a composition. I have aimed in these pages at insinuating the thought that the Prayer Book will repay study, and deep study, and that none can really appreciate it (what-

ever professions they may make to that effect), without at all events a patient and careful consideration of its structure and contents. If what I have written shall have the effect of giving to any reader a deeper insight into the significance of Devotional Forms, with which his ear has been long familiarized, and of enabling him, while joining in them, to catch more of the spirit which they breathe, my labour will be abundantly repaid.

E. M. G.







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INTRODUCTORY.





## LECTURE I.

THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

"Thy memorial, O Lord, endureth throughout all generations."—  
PSALM cxxxv. 13.

BEFORE entering on the consideration of the English Office of the Holy Communion, it will be proper, by way of Preface, to give a slight sketch of the history and origin of the Ordinance.

Those who desire to understand Christianity thoroughly, whether in its doctrines or in its institutions, should always bear in mind that Judaism was the cradle of it. In fact, Christianity was not so much a new religion as the extraordinary development of a religion which had long existed. Judaism, indeed, was a narrow dull-coloured chrysalis; and Christianity in comparison of it is like the painted butterfly, free and ethereal, which disports itself in sunlight and air; still as the butterfly was once confined in the chrysalis, so the germ of Christianity lay hid in Judaism. "The salvation" (said our Lord to the woman of Samaria) "is of the Jews." The Saviour Himself was a Jew, pointed at by the silent (yet eloquent) finger of a thousand oracles, given by God's holy Prophets, "which had been

since the world began." His Apostles, the great instruments of propagating His religion, were all Jews, reared in Jewish habits of thought, surrounded by Jewish associations, devout men according to the Law. Many of the *doctrines* which they proclaimed on the housetop (such as the Resurrection, the Atonement, and to a certain extent the Trinity) had been whispered in the ear under the Law, spoken of under the voice mysteriously as subjects reserved for the initiated, and on which fuller revelations were ~~in~~ store for God's people. The highest and most comprehensive *precept* which they had to give,—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might,"—had been given ages before by the great Jewish Legislator. The petitions of the *Model Prayer*, which they were to put into the mouth of disciples, did not (for the most part) originate with their Divine Master; they had been floating about previously in the devotional literature of the Jews; and Christ's part in them was chiefly that of compilation and arrangement. Baptism, the initiatory *rite* of Christianity, was perfectly familiar to the Jews of the time of Christ. It had been practised for long centuries at the admission of Proselytes; and the authority for it was supposed to be derived<sup>1</sup> from the

<sup>1</sup> "They" (the Jewish writers) "take notice that Moses (Numb. xv. 15) orders thus, *One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger (or proselyte) that sojourneth with you.* Now they reckon that the Israelites themselves were at their entering into Covenant with God at the time of their receiving the Law in Mount Sinai, all of them washed or baptized. So they understand those words (Exod. xix. 10), *And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day.*"—Wall's *History of Infant Baptism*. Introduction, § 2.



direction for a ceremonial washing, which Moses gave the people before they were formally admitted into covenant with God at Mount Sinai. And what shall we say of the Lord's Supper? That it grew entirely out of the Jewish Paschal Festival, which it was destined to supersede; that the elements of wine and unleavened bread had been used for long centuries in the Paschal feast, and a blessing or consecration pronounced over them, long before our Lord by *His* Blessing converted them into a Sacrament of His Religion. Let us, as it were, visit the Lord's Supper in this its cradle, by recounting some particulars of the Paschal Festival, as they are given by Jewish writers.

All Jewish feasts were preluded with a ceremonial washing, which, in the case of the Passover, was repeated in the course of it. The washing of the disciples' feet, when the supper was served,<sup>2</sup> was a usual ceremony, the only novel circumstance being that on this occasion the Master of the Feast Himself officiated in this humiliating way. After the first washing, the Master,

<sup>2</sup> Our Authorized Version tells us that, "supper being ended," the washing of the Disciples' feet took place (John xiii. 2). This is a mistranslation. If the usual reading *δείπνου γενομένου* be retained, the sense will be, "supper being served," or, "when supper had begun" (compare such expressions as *ἡμέρας γενομένης*, "when it was day," "when day had begun," *πρωίας γενομένης*, "when the morning was come"). Tischendorf accepts the reading *γινόμενου*, which would mean, "when supper was beginning," "when they were on the point of sitting down." But, independently of particular expressions, it is abundantly clear from the Sacred Narrative that supper could not have been "ended" when the washing took place; for it is represented as in progress afterwards (ver. 26), where we read, "When He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon."

taking a cup of wine in his hand, said, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, the King of the Universe, who hast created the fruit of the vine." The cup was then passed from hand to hand, and each guest tasted it. Our Lord's compliance with this early part of the ceremony is mentioned by St. Luke alone, who makes it extremely clear that this was *not* the Sacramental Cup, by referring shortly afterwards to that as "the Cup *after* Supper," whereas this Cup, and the participation of it, opened the proceedings. A table was then brought in, spread with bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and a thick sauce<sup>3</sup> made to resemble clay, and intended to remind the pious Israelite of his forefathers having made bricks in Egypt. Crowning all these viands, was the roasted body of the Passover Lamb. Then the Master blessed God, who created the fruit of the earth; and dipping some of the herbs in the sauce, ate them, and was followed in this action by the whole company. (We are at once reminded that the dipping of a sop and the handing it to Judas was the way in which our Blessed Lord indicated the traitor to his colleagues.) Then followed a formal declaration of the grounds of the Paschal Institution, which was done in this manner. A child, or some one assuming the character of a stranger, asked, "What meaneth this service?" The answer was, "How different is this night from all other nights! for all other nights we wash but once, in this twice; in all other nights we eat either leavened or unleavened bread, in this unleavened only; in other nights, we eat any sort of herbs, in this night, bitter herbs; in all other nights we eat and drink either sitting or lying, but in this we

<sup>3</sup> It was called *Charoseth*, and made of raisins, figs, dates, &c., pressed or stamped together.

lie (or recline) only.” (Remember that the disciple, whom Jesus loved, was *lying* on His bosom at supper.) Then followed a recital to this effect,—that the Passover was instituted to commemorate the Lord’s passing over the houses of their fathers,—that the bitter herbs were eaten, to remind them how the Egyptians had made the lives of those fathers bitter; and, thirdly, that the unleavened bread was to remind them how they had been cast out of Egypt in haste, before their dough had time to be leavened. This formal recital, declaration, or showing forth of the grounds of the Paschal Institution, corresponds to, and is represented by, that passage of our Communion Office which begins, “And to the end that we should alway remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained to us; He hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort.” And to it no doubt St. Paul refers, when he says of the Christian Ordinance: “As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do *show forth* (declare, recite the intention and significance of) the Lord’s Death, till He come.” The second cup of wine was then blessed and partaken of; after which followed the breaking and distribution (after a thanksgiving similar to that said over the wine) of one of the unleavened cakes, two of which were always provided. Then the company partook of the lamb, engaging in conversation the while; and it was during this period probably that the indication of Judas, as traitor, by giving him a piece of bread sopped or dipped in the clay-like sauce, and his subsequent exit took place.

Though he joined in the *Paschal* supper, there are good grounds for doubt<sup>4</sup> whether he was present at the institution of the Eucharist. There was no reason why he should witness what, as his wicked design was now matured by Satan's entering into him, he would never have to hand down or administer. The conversation which we may suppose had dropped into an ominous silence after his sullen withdrawal, was beginning to revive, when the great Master of the Feast with peculiar solemnity took the second unleavened cake, and, breaking it with both His hands according to the usual form, substituted for the ordinary Judaical blessing certain words of His own, which gracious words were for eleven centuries of the Church's existence (as indeed they are now) the comfort of faithful hearts and simple minds, but since that time have been the rallying-point of controversy for curious and carnally-minded disputants: "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you: Do this in remembrance of Me."

Soon after, the third cup was mingled, which was usually called "the cup of blessing." Over this cup it was usual to give thanks for the Covenant of Circumcis-

<sup>4</sup> It is a moot point whether Judas partook of the Holy Communion. The generality of modern critics (Dean Ellicott among the number) think his exit from the supper-room to have taken place before the Institution of the Eucharist, the latter half of which at all events is expressly said to have occurred μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνῆσαι "after supper," Luke xxii. 20. Our Prayer Book represents the view of the earlier commentators, who regard Judas as the first instance of an impenitent and unworthy communicant: "Lest after the taking of this Holy Sacrament the devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas." Canon Wordsworth and Dean Alford subscribe to this view. The precise chronological arrangement of the events of the Last Supper is surrounded with great difficulties.



ion, and for the Law of Moses. But “the cup of blessing” was now to commemorate a better Covenant, and a new Law ; and accordingly our LORD, here again abandoning the customary formula, pronounced, and in pronouncing prescribed to His Church, these new words of Consecration : “Drink ye all of this ; for this is My Blood of the New Covenant” (observe, the cup had been hitherto the cup of the *Old* Covenant, thanksgiving for the blessings of the Old Covenant having been made over it), which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.”

A fourth cup followed, and sometimes a fifth : though there are no traces of our LORD’s having observed these parts of the ceremonial, which do not seem to have been by the Jews themselves considered essential. The supper was terminated by singing certain Psalms (“When they had sung an hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives”) ; and if these Psalms, with which the festival closed, were, as they are commonly represented to have been, the 116th, 117th, and 118th, most striking under the circumstances must have been the use of those words which occur towards the end of the last of these : “God is the Lord, who hath showed us light : bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the Altar.” The Victim was there, Who was to be sacrificed in the course of the next morning, and the cords were preparing with which to bind Him ; for Judas was just hatching his infernal plot, and, after the interlude of the Agony and the disciples’ slumber, it was to result in the action described in those words : “Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and *bound Him.*”

We trust that no one, to whose mind this historical origin of the Lord's Supper is unfamiliar, will be disposed to think that we derogate from the dignity of the Ordinance when we thus trace up both parts of it to a Jewish rite. That Jewish rite was itself in its main features ordained by the Almighty ; and, moreover, although it is, as we have shown, a well-established fact that the elements of the Lord's Supper were employed at Jewish festivals, and received a kind of consecration, they never had the virtue, and therefore never had the dignity of a Sacrament, till Christ's institution of them to that end. To adduce a case somewhat parallel, which may illustrate the matter in hand. It is clear that the rainbow must have existed, before GOD invested it with a religious significance, and made it the sign of His Covenant. The phenomenon is produced, as is well known, by the refraction of the rays of light, when striking upon the pendent drops of the shower ; and as there had been copious rain during the period of the flood (and doubtless long before that period,—for “the mist that went up from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground,” was the exclusive method of irrigation in Paradise only) ; and as the agency of light had been in operation from the Creation, it necessarily follows that the phenomenon, which is the combined result of the two, must have been witnessed by human eyes before God called Noah's attention to it. But never before God said, “I do set” (or *appoint*—the Hebrew word is quite capable of this translation, without any straining of its meaning) “My bow in the clouds,” was the rainbow the sign of a Divine Covenant ; never before did it possess that religious meaning, which ever since it has had for the world of men. So with the Eucharistic ele-

ments. They had been used before in Jewish festivals, and received (as all food was wont to be received by the Jews) with a grace and words of thanksgiving. But never before had they a peculiar meaning in connexion with the great Covenant of Redemption. Never before did they preach to the mind of man through the eye the great doctrine of the Atonement; still less did the participation of them ever before convey to the soul of the faithful the Body and Blood of the Crucified Redeemer.

And now to what practical account shall we turn these reflections on the historical origin of the Holy Communion?

We learn a lesson, first, respecting the gradual growth and expansion of Religious Truth among men; and, secondly, respecting the possible co-existence of Unity with the utmost difference of Religious Forms.

1. Christianity was not strictly an original Religion, either in its doctrines, precepts, or institutions. It grew out of a preceding dispensation; its holiest rite is literally a fragment, torn off from an old Jewish festival, and placed by the Saviour in what I may call a sacramental shrine. And in like manner this preceding dispensation itself had gone on growing. The original promise respecting the Seed of the Woman formed the whole religion of Adam and Eve. This religion received great accession from succeeding promises to Abraham and his descendants; it made a great shoot at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, another important development, when the throne of David was established. It was enlarged, spiritualized, every way improved,—yet without any departure from the old platform,—by the ministry of the Prophets; until at length the Coming One came forth

from the bosom of this religion, as it was waxing old and ready to vanish away, and swept aside the old rudiments, and pointed out to men the true teaching which was underlying them. Yet He came not (if we may trust His own description of the object of His Mission) "to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them."

Now, as there were developments of Judaism, as time went on, so doubtless there have been, and still will be, developments of Christianity. Wherever there is life there is growth; and wherever the religion of Christ has a real living hold upon the minds of men, those minds, through many errors, contradictions, eccentricities, heresies, will struggle on to a forward movement. It is a great mistake, whatever their temporary irregularities may be, to try to stifle these movements either by authority, civil or ecclesiastical, or, which is the same thing (only in a much worse form), by a popular hue and cry. You *cannot* stifle them without stifling the life out of the Church. Controversies and theological movements are the conditions of life; and the essential condition of a controversy is, that one of the combatants must be in the wrong; and the essential condition of a theological movement is, that many persons who throw their weight into the move will be guilty of foolish and unscriptural, and even fanatical extravagances. It is of no use to make a bonfire of them at the stake, or, which is the modern fashion of persecution, to hang them up on the gibbet of public opinion. As well might you say of a very wild mischievous boy, who was once a quiet and docile child, "I shall set myself to stop that boy's growing, make him grow downwards, and put him back two or three years in life." You cannot make him stop



growing without killing him. Take comfort, then, in the distracting movements of the Church of Christ, and remember that there is One presiding over those movements, who knows how to disentangle Truth from error, to sweep away the rubbish of human fancies, and establish the mind of man in what is sound and good. Never was better counsel given respecting novel and unfamiliar views of Religious Truth, than that of Gamaliel to the Sanhedrim: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Yea; GOD, by means of contradictions and heresies, will clear His Truth to the minds of men, will define it more sharply, will make it better understood and appreciated; for until a truth is assaulted, and tested by assault, it can never be fully apprehended.

But it will be said, "Since you admit that Religious Truth expands in the minds of men, as Time goes on, so as to present itself in new aspects, and to develop itself in new forms,—since Christianity itself is capable of further illustration than it has yet received, by increased learning, better knowledge of the language of the New Testament, new evidences, unearthed by Science, new discoveries (by means of the event) of the meaning of Prophecy, and so forth; is there no criterion by which we may distinguish between true and false views? Are we bound to take up with any extravagance or fanaticism, which the movement of the religious mind of our time may throw up to the surface?" Not so. There is in the Volume of Holy Scripture a perfect Canon of Religious Truth. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word,

it is because there is no light in them." Apply the Canon fairly and with prayer, discarding all prepossessions, and giving their due weight to counterbalancing truths, and whatever may be the fancies of others, your own mind is perfectly safe. Where Scripture speaks unequivocally and copiously (as on the necessity of Repentance and Faith, the duty of Prayer, the virtue of Christ's Atonement) the point is of first-rate magnitude and primary importance. Where Scripture makes statements on both sides, as on the question pending between Calvinists and Arminians, both statements, with all their logical consequences, must be accepted, and the exact theoretical adjustment of them deferred to the time, when we shall see face to face, and know as we are known. Where the Scriptural argument on one side is far stronger than on the other, though on the other too something may be said (as in the case of Episcopacy and Infant Baptism), we must side with the stronger argument, yet with charity to those who maintain the weaker. And where Scripture says nothing on a theological topic, we are at liberty to hold any pious opinion, as a private fancy, so as it does not contradict, either explicitly or by inference, what Scripture does say. But in speaking thus of Scripture as a criterion, which, if fairly applied, can never mislead, common sense points out that what is meant is, *Scripture studied in its original languages, and with all the light which learning, and especially the knowledge of primitive antiquity, can throw upon it.* He who can do no more than read the Bible in English may doubtless, under the teaching of God's Spirit, save his soul alive (which indeed he might do, even if the Bible were torn away from him, by believing all the Articles of the Christian Faith); but surely it stands to reason

that such a man is in no position to settle a controversy or to determine a moot point. For example, in the controversy upon Infant Baptism, most persons would consider the question settled at once by the practice of the early Church when it was still under the eye of the Apostles. Did they, or did they not at that time baptize infants? The New Testament gives no answer, except by inference. But the earliest Fathers give a very explicit answer. Justin says, for example (writing about forty years after the Apostles), that "certain Christians of sixty or seventy years of age, living in his days, were made disciples of Christ from their childhood." Justin was not inspired; but what he says is fair historical evidence in favour of Infant Baptism, and evidence, it is clear, which cannot be appreciated by a person who has never heard of Justin. This, however, is only one out of numberless instances which might be adduced, to show how essential sound learning, and especially a knowledge of Primitive Christianity, is to a correct interpretation of Holy Scripture. Holding fast Scripture *as thus illustrated*, we cannot ourselves make any great error in controversy. And amid the abounding errors and contradictions of the day we may comfort ourselves by thinking that by means of them all, God is really showing to His Church some new aspect or aspects of the Truth. The Truth has a vitality in it still; and many dry rudiments of it, which at present lie dull and uninteresting in our minds, are yet destined to expand and acquire a new significance. Let the mind be frankly open to any and every Truth, however unfamiliar to us the first view of it, which may turn out to be in accordance with the teaching of the Apostles.

2. But a moment remains to follow out the thought

of the possible co-existence of real Unity with total difference of form.

There has been a Church of God, ever since there was a promise for Faith to lay hold of; but how different the forms which the Church has taken at different stages of her career! How different the Law from the Patriarchal Religion, the Prophets from the Law, and Christianity from the Prophets! How different the modern forms of Christianity from its ancient form! Looking to mere outward circumstances (which do not the least affect the essentials of the Rite), how different our present mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper, both from the primitive Institution, and from the early Christians' practice, according to which it was connected with a love-feast! Yet our hope and our faith is the same as that of Apostles and Apostolic men, and our Sacraments are essentially one with theirs. Unity is not uniformity. Unity is harmony; uniformity is monotony. Do not stickle for uniformity, as long as unity is secured. The having the same order of Worship, the same liturgical observances, the same hymns and the same prayers in the same method of arrangement,—friends, the Unity of the Church of Christ does not consist in this. Nay, but in the spiritual worship of one Lord, in the common confession of one Faith, in the filial acknowledgment of one God and Father, who is above all, and through all, and in us all, we find the living, growing principles which knit together the different members of the Body of Christ, Jew and Greek, male and female, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, and free,—which cement the structure of the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Jerusalem built as a city that is at Unity in itself.



## LECTURE II.

HOW IT FARED WITH THE EUCHARIST WHILE THE INSTITUTION WAS STILL UNDER THE EYE OF THE APOSTLES.

“When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. For in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God?”—1 COR. xi. 20—22.

IN our last lecture we took a view of the Holy Eucharist in its cradle, wrapped, as it were, in its Paschal swaddling-clothes. We now open the second chapter of its history. This second chapter is drawn from the notice of it by the Apostle Paul, as celebrated in the Corinthian Church.

First, it is important to observe that, on St. Paul’s becoming an Apostle, the Institution was revealed to him by our Blessed LORD. Of it, as of other matters more purely doctrinal, he could say with truth, “I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” St. Paul was to hand down or deliver to all the Churches of his planting, together with the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel, this Gospel Institution. And accordingly some means must be taken of putting him in this respect on an exact level with the original Apostles. He must hear from the Lord Himself a recital of what took place at the last Supper, and must receive from the Lord’s own lips the Commission which gives virtue and validity to the Sacrament. A transaction so important is not to be transmitted to him through the medium of any man’s memory ;,

it is to come to him pure and limpid from the fountain-head of Truth. And accordingly we read in the twenty-third verse of the chapter before us: "For I have received of the Lord"—not of Peter, or John, or Matthew, not even through their instrumentality, but of the Lord—"that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread,"—and then follows an account of the Institution, somewhat more exact than that given by the two first Evangelists, and having certain original touches in it, as where the Lord is made to speak of His Body being "*broken*" for us, and where the cup is called "*the New Testament in His Blood.*" St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, who was not present at the original institution, has evidently drawn his account from the Pauline revelation, not from the memory of the eleven. The coincidence of his narrative with St. Paul's account is a most interesting trace of the association of the two friends, so often incidentally noticed in the Acts of the Apostles.

My hearers, what shall I say of those Institutes of the Christian Religion, to which a glorified Christ refers in a glorified state—institutes upon which He holds a colloquy from heaven with his newly-admitted Apostle, in the solemn stillness, perhaps, of the wilds of Arabia? Shall I say of such Institutes that they are of more importance than the points of faith and practice, which He dwelt upon while on earth? Nay; without going thus far, we may surely say that any matter which the Lord Jesus, not content with adverting to it in the course of His Ministry, has reiterated from heaven, must be a matter of the utmost moment to the well-being of His Church. And if there be any among my hearers who either neglects the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or

DUCTORY.] *the Institution was under the Apostles.* 19

thinks meanly of it,—any who has taken up with that false notion of the popular religionism, that in Christianity faith is every thing, and Ordinance nothing,—I charge upon him to observe that the voice prescribing the Eucharist Rite is a voice which issues forth not merely from the Passover-chamber, but also from the many mansions of the Father's House, and that the form which gives utterance to this voice is not that of a man of "marred visage," but that of Him whose "countenance is as the sun shineth in his strength," and before whose Resurrection-Glory Apostles fell to the earth confounded.

But to proceed with our history of the Eucharistic Rite.

In the account of the Natural Creation contained in the book of Genesis, we find the various elements, Light and Darkness, Vapours and Water, Earth and Sea, in a state of confusion at first. Afterwards God divides the light from the darkness, the clouds from the waters, the earth from the sea, disentangling and giving them distinct spheres. Something very analogous to this we find in the history of the Primitive Church. It presents to us the appearance of a confused state of things, out of which order and method of arrangement is to dawn gradually. The Apostles at first have charge of the temporal as well as the spiritual concerns of the Church; but afterwards it is thought better that the administration of Church alms should be made over to special officers called deacons, and the Apostles be left at liberty to attend wholly to spiritual duties. Inspiration and the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost seem to have been at first poured indiscriminately over all the members of the Apostolic Church. "Sons and daughters," "young

men and old," "servants and handmaidens" (i. e., male and female slaves) prophesied in those days and spake with tongues. And accordingly the distinction between ministers and people was not then by any means so clearly defined as it is now. Acts which we should reckon ministerial were not absolutely restricted to persons holding the ministerial office. The four daughters of St. Philip prophesied; Priscilla, as well as Aquila, expounded to Apollos the way of God more perfectly. Now-a-days Inspiration speaks exclusively through the Bible, which is its sole acknowledged repository, and the office of Christian teaching is considered the exclusive prerogative of those who are set apart for it by laying on of hands. Let me give another point, looking in the same direction. The Mother-Church of all Churches—that of Jerusalem—began its career with a community of goods. "Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." It was a beautiful theory. It was the realized ideal of what Christianity would make society, if its principles had free scope, and bore undisputed sway in every heart. But it was not an ideal which could be realized upon Earth for more than one halcyon moment of the Church's existence, when, in the earliest morning prime of spiritual life, heart bounded to meet heart in Christian love and joy. The case of Ananias and Sapphira soon showed that this arrangement of community of goods could be taken advantage of by covetous people within the fold of Christ. The offenders were made examples of; and after that time we read no more of any attempt at community of goods in any Church; probably even in the Church of Jerusalem, property found its way again into the original



hands, and the poor and rich became once more distinct classes. The principle of brotherhood in Christ excluding all social distinctions was indeed heavenly and divine ; but it could not be fully carried out in the actual life of a wicked world, nay, nor in the actual life of an Apostolic Church, in which (although Apostolic) there were tares growing side by side with the wheat.

Now there was another point, besides that of property, in which the early Christians at first had mutual fellowship. Rich and poor supped together ; ate their daily food at a common board. The plan seems to have been that each one should bring with him, in proportion to his means, a contribution of food, which was to be placed upon the table in the upper room, where their assemblies were held, and partaken of in common. It was natural—nay, it was an almost certain consequence from the circumstances of the original Institution—that the Lord's Supper should form part of, and be celebrated in the course of, this common meal. It had grown out of the half-social, half-religious entertainment of the Passover ; and to an entertainment of a social character it was naturally annexed still. Accordingly it is intimated in the Acts of the Apostles that there was a daily celebration of the Eucharist in the Church of Jerusalem ; daily of course it would be, because the supper, or chief meal, must recur daily, and whenever it recurred, being the common meal of Christians, at which they met one another as Christians, it would surely be sanctified by the appointed Commemoration of the Saviour's dying Love. So we read : "They continuing *daily* with one accord in the Temple" (this was their devotion as pious Jews), "and breaking bread from house to house" (this was their devotion as pious Christians), "did eat their

meat" (partook of food) "with gladness and singleness of heart." There was a simple domestic joy about those early Eucharistic meals, which, alas! was soon to be dissipated.

For just as the crime and punishment of Ananias and Sapphira seem to have exploded the community of *property* in the Church of Jerusalem, so certain excesses in the Corinthian Church, in connexion with the common Eucharistic meal,—excesses punished by God's temporal judgment, and severely rebuked by His Apostle,—gradually exploded and put an end to the practice of combining the Sacrament with a meal at all. The richer Christians, opening their basket of provisions, and not waiting (it appears) till the whole Christian brotherhood had assembled, and the formal thanksgiving at the opening of the meal had been said, ate and drank to excess, while the poor (more especially if belated) found a most insufficient supper. We open our eyes wide with wonder at a desecration so totally unfamiliar to ourselves, so impossible under the circumstances of the Modern Church; but the fact stands on record in language altogether plain and incapable of being mistaken: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken."

The fact was, that the community of meals among the Christians, and the association of the Eucharist with a *bonâ fide* meal, was like the community of property,—a beautiful theory,—aye, and the true and high ideal of Christian Life; but a theory which could not be worked out, and an ideal which it was impossible to realize in an actual Church, having tares in it—that is, having un-

sound Christians in its bosom. So experience had shown St. Paul. And, accordingly, he, writing under the inspiration of God, and in the exercise of the Apostolic authority given him by Christ, cuts the knot which had hitherto bound together the meal and the Eucharist, and disentangles for ever the religious from the social element of the rite. "What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" "If any man hunger, let him eat at home." Now, as a meal has no use or significance except when one is hungry, this is as much as saying that the Lord's Supper was no more to form part and parcel of a meal.—With which word of Apostolic authority, the religious element of the Lord's Supper disentangled itself and became a separate thing, just as when God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters," the light vapours rose from the aqueous mass, and hung suspended in the sky under the name of clouds.

There was a time, then, as we have seen,—the time of the Church's infancy,—when the supper or chief daily meal of Christians was a Sacrament. Those were days of great spirituality, intense unction, fervent zeal, warm love, when the Brotherhood of Christians was as yet white as snow in Salmon. And it is curious to observe how, in any peculiarly strong glow of spiritual feeling, the strangeness of this original mixture between the ideal and actual life of Christians, between the religious and the social, between the meal and the Sacrament, vanishes. There is an interesting anecdote to this effect in the life of Fletcher, the Vicar of Madeley,<sup>1</sup> a man who always

<sup>1</sup> The anecdote is given from memory. I have not the book by me to verify the details.

breathed an atmosphere of faith and love, and panted after communion with God as the hart after the water-brooks. Towards the end of his life, when his soul was filled and his countenance radiant with love and joy, two friends (one of whom was the narrator) came to Madeley from a distance to visit him. Hearing of their arrival, and knowing the ride was a long one, he ordered the servant to bring them some refreshment, and hastened out into the yard to greet them as they were dismounting. Both were men of devout minds, to whom he might say the things of which his heart was full, and while they were engaged in putting up their horses, the good Vicar spoke to them of spiritual topics, and particularly of the Love of Christ, and of the necessity of our being conformed to His image. He spoke out of the abundance of his heart, with an eye kindling and a face flushing, as he pursued those great themes ; and his two guests, knowing him to be doomed by his disease to death, and to be then hastening to a speedy vision of his Lord, on whose praises he was so eloquent, caught the spiritual contagion, and were lifted up for the time being into a higher moral atmosphere. At this juncture the servant entered with refreshments, which happened to be bread and wine. Fletcher catching sight of them, seemed seized by an uncontrollable impulse, and breaking the bread and pouring out the wine, delivered it to them with the customary Eucharistic formulary : “ The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee ; the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee.”

The narrator adds words to this effect, that, so far from being revolting or having the appearance of desecration, it was the most solemn and impressive Sacrament he had ever received. We can well understand it. The



action must not of course be drawn into a precedent by men like ourselves, who live on a very low level of spiritual attainment. But in Fletcher and his friends it was neither hypocritical nor irreverent. When men are in a high state of spiritual feeling, amounting almost to ecstasy, the exuberant devotion of their hearts will sometimes break through the usual forms of religious observance, and mix itself up with their daily life and common intercourse. In such a mood they take no heed of circumstances: every thing is sanctified in their eyes; a stable becomes to them (was not Jesus born in a stable?) a Church, and a refreshment becomes a Eucharist. After all, it is only a momentary return to the quite primitive state of things, before the Sacrament was disconnected from the meal, the state of things depicted in the verse already quoted: "And they continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

So many useful and interesting reflections arise from what has been said, that it is hard to find room for them all. We must select two or three from the mass.

1. Observe that St. Paul, while he forbids the Eucharist to be partaken of as a meal, and for the satisfaction of hunger, still stoutly maintains its social character, and indicates how appropriately this social character of the Ordinance is emblemized by the holy<sup>2</sup> loaf. One

<sup>2</sup> This expression is not my own. It comes from the first Prayer Book of King Edward the Sixth, in which the fifth Rubric after the Communion runs thus:—

"And forasmuch as the Pastors and Curates within this realm shall continually find at their costs and charges in their cures suf-

Loaf is broken and distributed among many ; all partake of and assimilate it, and so become one Body, the Body of Christ, which is by all assimilated. Hence the Eucharist is a Sacrament of our Communion with one another, no less than of our Communion with Christ. "For we being many are one bread [one loaf], and one body ; for we are all partakers of that one loaf." Hence our excellent Reformers, in purifying the old missal, have shown themselves extremely jealous of the social character of the rite. Even in the case of administration to a sick person, it is so prescribed that three, or two at the least, must communicate with him ; and in the public Office we find this rubric : "If there be not above twenty persons in the Parish of discretion to receive the Communion ; yet there shall be no Communion, except four (or three at the least) communicate with the Priest." Private masses, at which the Priest alone communicated, al-

ficient bread and wine for the Holy Communion (as oft as their Parishioners shall be disposed for their spiritual comfort to receive the same), it is therefore ordered, that in recompense of such costs and charges, the Parishioners of every Parish shall offer every Sunday, at the time of the Offertory, the just value and price of *the holy loaf* (with all such money and other things as were wont to be offered with the same), to the use of their Pastors and Curates, and that in such order and course as they were wont to find and pay the said *holy loaf*."

The expression is a pleasing one. But it should be remembered that our word "loaf" does not give an exact idea of the form of the Passover Cakes. I take the word "loaf" (Germ. Leib) to mean etymologically a lump or mass ; whereas the Passover Cakes were flat, round, and thin. Perhaps the form of the Romish Wafer was originally suggested by that of the Passover Cakes, though the account usually given of the form of the Wafer is, that it was intended to represent the Denarius (or Roman Penny), in reference to the pieces of silver for which our LORD was sold.

together obscured this social feature of the rite, and so, as our Reformers rightly thought, imperilled its vitality. But no mere formal provision of the Ritual can secure that true union of heart and sympathy with our brother Christians, by which alone we can give to our Communion a really social character. Do we resort to them in a spirit of great kindness to others, "forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any?" But even forbearance is only negative. Are we taking an active interest in the wants, trials, weaknesses, necessities of our fellow-Christians, not merely from the dictates of a natural compassion (which a heathen might be actuated by), but from a discerning acknowledgment of their brotherhood with us in one Faith, one Hope, one Baptism, one Adoption, one Redemption? Do we pray for them? And, specially in the celebration of the Holy Communion, do we refer their wants and wishes, no less than our own, to GOD, or coop ourselves up in the narrow range of our own concerns and sympathies? I believe that a vast share of the Blessing of Public Ordinances of Religion generally is altogether missed and forfeited, because men will resort to them as Private Ordinances, thinking only of their own case, and not making an effort to throw themselves with an expansive sympathy into the case of others.

2. A word may be appropriately said upon the ordinary social meals of Christians. The Eucharist has now been torn away from them, and placed in a shrine of its own, removed from the possibility of desecration. But it were devoutly to be wished that we could see the stamp of the Eucharist,—its image and superscription,—resting upon all our social receptions of food. Still the

rule holds good that we are to sanctify our necessary and common, no less than our religious actions, that “whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of GOD.” The utmost mirthfulness of heart and of conversation may thus be sanctified, so long as nothing is said which trespasses on the bounds of modesty, reverence, and charity; for our LORD Himself was present at a Wedding Festival,—and a Festival at which it is clear from the narrative that conviviality had reached a considerable height. Do we sanctify our social entertainments by striving to realize His Presence at them, and thus by bidding Him to the Board? And last, but not least, how is grace said? Is it sometimes forgotten altogether? oftener still mechanically and rapidly recited, without even a momentary uplifting of the heart? Are not the ordinary graces (I only throw this out for consideration) somewhat too short to take hold of the mind? Is it not the case often with well-disposed persons that the grace is over before the attention can rally? Beautiful at all events are those longer graces once in popular use, but which have now retreated into the devout seclusion of the Academy, in which according to the true old fashion the form is interspersed with responds, simply said on common days, and on certain high festivals of the Church sweetly sung?

3. It is well by every means in our power to strive to sanctify common life, and ordinary engagements. It is not only well, it is necessary. No man is really religious at all who withdraws any part of his ordinary life from the influence and control of Religion, and confines his Devotion to certain seasons and certain localities. And yet there is a wholesome warning for us all in the disentanglement of the Holy Communion from the social



meal with which it had once been associated ; and there is great truth and significance in the wise man's admonition, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Among certain religionists, there may be observed a sort of interlacing of the secular with the spiritual ; a parade of religious topics where they are sure to be unfavourably received ; proposals for prayer where the occasion and circumstances are unsuitable, and the minds of the persons to whom it is proposed are not in tune for it ; an unreserved manner of throwing abroad Divine Truth in ordinary conversation ; all which in theory is right, and in an ideal state of things would find place, but in the actual state of the Church and the world is likely only to shock the one, and to incur the ridicule of the other. That these considerations should have weight with us, we are taught by those words of Him, who spake as never man spake : "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." There is a great necessity for holy discrimination, and a greater still for a spirit of deeper religious reverence, if we propose to introduce spiritual topics in general conversation. There is a feeling, innate in every human mind, of the distinctness between the sacred and the secular, which you will only do harm if you rudely violate. And it is a true and just feeling, under the present economy of things, which is necessarily imperfect. That the Lord's Day should be esteemed above ordinary days ; that the Church, or place of assembly for Christ's flock, should be esteemed above a common house (a sentiment, by the way, plainly in accordance with the mind of St. Paul in our text : "What? have ye not houses to eat and drink

in? or despise ye the Church of God?") ; that one class of men should be regarded as set apart for sacred functions, upon which functions ordinary men may not lawfully intrude,—all these feelings and habits of thought are the very safeguards of Religion in the minds of mankind at large, and, as being so, must not be disregarded or dealt rudely with. Under the present Dispensation things sacred must of necessity be separate from common things ; and God's Ordinance has made them so. Be it ours by faith and hope to anticipate, and by spiritual diligence to hasten on that happier period, when every day shall be a Sabbath of rest, spent in the sunshine of Christ's countenance ; when there shall be no more any temple, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of the Heavenly City ; when all shall be priests alike, and offer continually the sacrifice of Praise ; when, finally, the Lord shall drink with us the new wine of spiritual joy at the marriage-supper of the Lamb ; and the sacramental memorial of Him shall be superseded by His visible Presence in glory.

PART I.

THE CHURCH-YARD.



## LECTURE I.

### OF THE LORD'S PRAYER AND THE COLLECT FOR PURITY.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ? & the Lord search the heart. & try the reins."—JER. xvii. 9, 10.

IN the Cathedral, and often in the Parish Church of our country, there are several stages of approach to the immediate precinct, in which stands the Table of the Lord, the point of sight for all the worshippers. First, there is the Choir (or Chancel), which at its further end contains this precinct ; then there is the Transept ; and finally the Nave. But around the building itself often lies a consecrated Burial Ground, at the entrance of which the Minister in the Order for the Burial of the Dead is directed to meet the corpse.

The Office of the Holy Communion, on the consideration of which we enter to-day, has similarly several stages of approach into its inmost sanctuary. The culminating act of the whole Service is, of course, the consecration and participation of the Elements. But towards this act there are several advances. There is the "Ter-sanctus," or Seraphic Hymn of Praise, with the Prayer of Access. There are the Comfortable Words, by which we lift ourselves up to Praise,—resembling

the steps by which we pass up into the choir. There is the Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution,—the more immediate preparation, which may correspond with the transept. Then comes that portion of the Office, at which non-communicants may be present, embracing the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, Creed, Sermon, Offertory, and Prayer for the Church Militant. What remains may be properly called the earlier preparation, corresponding to the church-yard which lies around the sacred edifice. It consists of the Ten Commandments,—the Law, which in its condemning power is to real Christians dead and buried, and cannot harm them. And to this Burial-ground of the Decalogue, which solemnizes the mind by its grave and stern associations, we are admitted by a little gate or porch, consisting of two short Prayers. It is in this Porch that we shall place ourselves to-day, to survey its construction.—The above illustration is, I readily grant, drawn from the fancy. Still it may be useful, if it serve to show the great care with which our Church seeks to prepare us for the highest ordinance of Religion, and the gradual approaches, by which she leads the mind towards the inner sanctuary of these holy mysteries. Here we have fence within fence, preparation within preparation. And the lesson is, of course, “If you desire to communicate worthily, see that you get your mind in order.” These arrangements are the faithful echo made by our Church to that inspired warning: “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

The Lord's Prayer opens the office of the Communion. We shall not enter at all into the matter or substance of this Divine Prayer, as that would divert us at much too great length from our present purpose, but confine our-



selves to a few remarks on the position which it holds. The Lord's Prayer may be regarded in two distinct lights, as a summary of Prayer and as a model of Prayer. In the first of these lights it is the modern fashion to regard it, and under this view it is naturally introduced, not at the beginning, but at the end of Prayer. We feel (and the feeling is most just) that our Prayers are imperfect at best, and greatly need supplementing by some form in which there are no defects; that we omit oftentimes through haste or ignorance, or superficiality of mind, to petition for some things which may be most desirable for us; and so at the end of our Private Prayers, or at the end of our Family Prayers, we recite the Lord's Prayer, as summing up all that we can want or wish for in a few pregnant words. A curious instance, by the way, of the different line in which modern and ancient thought travel, even where both are equally correct. The Prayer Book never introduces the Lord's Prayer at the close of any Service; it is always either at the opening, as is here, or at the opening of a separate section of the office (like the Post-communion). The Morning and Evening Prayer were formerly opened with the versicle and respond, "O Lord, open Thou my lips," "And my mouth shall show forth Thy praise," which was immediately followed by the Lord's Prayer; and it was the Reformers who thought it expedient to prefix a short introduction, consisting of the Sentences, Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution. If this introduction be regarded as only preparatory, our Morning and Evening Office may be said still to open with the Lord's Prayer, as does the Communion Office.—Now this position of the Prayer shows that it is regarded as a model rather than as a summary. The painter who is copying a picture, the

sculptor who is copying a bust, in the first instance sets before him that which he designs to copy. This being done, he casts from time to time his eyes upon his model, and guides his hand accordingly. Now this was the view which the Ancient Church (and our Liturgy, generally speaking, represents to us the views of the Ancient Church) took of the Lord's Prayer. It was a perfect model to be placed before the mind for imitation, and therefore to be recited in the first instance, or at each fresh section of the service, and to be reverted to mentally throughout. This is not the only view which may be taken of the Prayer, but it is a most true, and just, and Scriptural view. Let us imbibe it, if we have not yet done so, and embody it in our practice. Let us not rest content with the use of the Lord's Prayer as a form. Let us consider how we can bring our own private prayers into a closer conformity with the model. Let us bear in mind that the Lord's Prayer teaches us not only what to pray for, but also, if I may so say, what should be the proportions of our prayers. From the order of the petitions we learn the blessings which we should most covet, and from the spirituality of the greater number of them we learn how sparing, modest, and reserved should be our prayers for earthly blessings. And let me recommend, as a method of counteracting our partial tendencies in Prayer, that we should, from time to time, in our private devotions enlarge upon the Lord's Prayer by way of paraphrase. As in religious thought generally, so in Prayer particularly, we are sadly apt to run in our own groove; and thus the frequent recurrence to and study of the Lord's Prayer is very desirable, as tending to give us a larger and more comprehensive range of sympathies.



We now come to the opening Collect of the Communion, which, together with the Lord's Prayer, formed anciently the priest's private preparation for the Office, which he was to repeat secretly. By our present arrangements it is to be said openly and aloud, that all may participate in this preliminary act of devotion. It will be well in the first instance to lay before you the framework on which those wonderful compositions called Collects are constructed, that we may see how the parts of this Prayer are connected, and what is the one thought which knits together its various clauses in unity. The ground-plan, then, of a Collect is as follows. After the invocation, a foundation is laid for the petition by the recital of some doctrine, or of some fact of Gospel history, which is to be commemorated. Upon this foundation so laid down rises the petition or body of the Prayer. Then in a perfect specimen, like the Collect before us, the petition has the wings of a holy aspiration given to it, whereupon it may soar to Heaven. Then follows the conclusion, which, in the case of Prayers not addressed to the Mediator, is always through the Mediator, and which sometimes involves a doxology or ascription of praise.—In the present Collect, the doctrine upon which the petition is based is that unto GOD “all hearts are open, and all desires known,” and that from Him “no secrets are hid.” The petition based upon this doctrine is, that He would “cleanse the thoughts of our heart by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit.” And finally the aspiration in which the mind contemplates the glorious result of the Prayer,—the aspiration which lends wings to the petition, and lifts it up to Heaven, is,—“that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name.”

Now in considering these several parts of our Collect, we will take the aspiration first, and so work backwards. "That we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name."

The magnification of GOD's Holy Name,—that is, the telling forth how great He is, in concert with the Holy Angels,—is just what we are about to enter upon. The Holy Communion is (as we call it in one of the Post-communion prayers) "a sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving," and accordingly, when the office is mounting to its climax, we join our voices with those of the Seraphim who stand around the throne, and cry one to another (setting forth the moral grandeur and the glory of our God), "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty; Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High." And in the close of the Office is equally heard the key-note of high praise and magnification. For as after the first Institution of the Ordinance the Divine Master and His disciples sang an hymn, before they went out unto the Mount of Olives, so before the final blessing we join in the morning hymn<sup>1</sup> of the early Christians, which begins with the Anthem of the Angels at the Nativity, "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

One chief aspect then of the whole Service being Thanksgiving,—nay, the very word "Eucharist," which was in early times<sup>2</sup> appropriated to this Ordinance, mean-

<sup>1</sup> This hymn was used in the time of Athanasius (early part of the fourth century), as part of the Morning Service for every day.

<sup>2</sup> Ignatius (supposed to have been, with Polycarp, a disciple of St. John) is probably the first uninspired writer who speaks of the Holy Communion as the Eucharist. See his epistle to the Smyrnæans, ch. vi., where he says of certain heretics, against whom he is writing, "They abstain from Eucharist and Prayer, because they confess not the

ing "Thanksgiving Service," we reasonably place this aspect of it before us at the outset, and offer a fervent aspiration to Almighty God, that as we are about to magnify His Name, we may magnify it "worthily."

Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised from the dead."

Again, to the Philadelphians, ch. iv., "Let it be your endeavour to partake of one (and the same) Eucharist; for one is the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one the Cup for the Communion of His Blood."

In the above passages it would seem as if the Elements themselves were called the Eucharist.

In the following passages the Service seems to be so called:—

"Let that be accounted a valid Eucharist, which is under the Bishop, or him to whom the Bishop shall entrust the administration." Smyrn. viii.

"Endeavour then more frequently to assemble for Eucharist of God" (the Thanksgiving Service to God), "and for His glory." Eph. xiii.

"We have, however," says Mr. Palmer in his *Origines Liturgice*, "an earlier allusion to the Liturgy, under the title of *Eucharist*, or Thanksgiving, in the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, where, in forbidding and reasoning against the practice of some persons, who used the miraculous gift of tongues in an improper manner, namely, by celebrating the Liturgy in an unknown language, he says, 'When thou shalt *bless* with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy *giving of thanks*, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?' The meaning of this passage is obvious: 'If thou shalt *bless* the Bread and Wine in an unknown language, which has been given to thee by the Holy Spirit, how shall the layman say Amen at the end of thy Thanksgiving (Eucharist), seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?'"

The same view is taken of this passage of St. Paul by Professor Blunt and Canon Wordsworth. That the Apostle is alluding to the Holy Communion seems probable from Justin's description of its administration in the Primitive Church:—

"Bread is brought to the president of the assembly, and a cup of water and wine, and having received it, he puts up praise and

But how shall this be? We cannot worthily magnify God's Holy Name, unless we love Him truly. All magnification of His Name which does not spring from true love, must necessarily be hollow-hearted, insincere, hypocritical, rotten at the core. And thus the latter part of our aspiration, "that we may worthily magnify Thy Holy Name," throws us back upon the former, "that we may perfectly" (that is, sincerely, and with all our powers) "love Thee." Then what is the true love of God, for which we here pray? The mind is in no frame for this magnification, unless it loves God truly. What moral qualifications in ourselves does the love of God involve? It is easy to flatter ourselves we have it from our possessing a general religious sensibility, from an accessibility to good impressions, and from a certain tenderness of spirit which we discover in ourselves when the perfections of God, and specially His fatherly Love, are pathetically set forth. But the love of God, brethren, must be the love of God's will; for to love God is to love His character, and there is nothing which expresses so much of a person's character as his will—his expressed mind. Do we then love God's will, or expressed mind, under all circumstances, and whatever forms it may assume? Do we love it, when it prescribes what is difficult to flesh and blood—forbids what is naturally gratifying to us in a high degree? Do we love it, and acquiesce in it lovingly, when it prescribes suffering for us, as well as when it allows us an easy lot and few trials? Do we at all events strive and pray to love it?—To love God is to love His Name; and His Name, be

*thanksgiving* to the Father of all, through the name of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. . . . And when he has finished his prayer and *thanksgiving*" (Eucharist), "all the people, with an acclamation, say *Amen*."



it remembered, is Holiness as well as Love. Do we love Holiness? love the strictness of GOD's law? or do we desire, on the contrary, that its stringency as regards ourselves should be somewhat relaxed, that so high a standard of duty should not be insisted upon?—Do we honestly desire to be drawn into a still closer and closer intercourse with GOD (for that surely is a property of Love) ; or do we rather shrink from that closer intercourse, from the feeling that it might involve us in sacrifices for which we are not prepared?—Among men, a mere groundless fancy may often go under the name of love ; but to all higher forms of love moral congeniality between the parties is essential. Is there then between us and GOD any moral congeniality? Are we at all like GOD in His free and expansive sympathy with all creatures, irrational as well as rational? in His absolute detestation of sin? If not, what hinders? What is there in us uncongenial to GOD? Nothing at all, may be, in our lives. Nothing at all which struggles into visible development, and challenges notice. We may hope that comparatively few communicants live in the habit of violating GOD's law outwardly, or retain some *practice* which they know to be wrong. But are they therefore “worthy” communicants? Nay, this depends on the condition of the inner man of the heart. Are they there indulgent towards sin? Will they toy with it in their imagination, though they may not dare to practise it? Are they upright of heart? or do they try to reason away those passages of GOD's Word, which at first sight, and to a simple and unsophisticated mind, seem to prescribe something to which they feel an invincible repugnance? Do they manfully act up to their convictions of truth and right, or enter into a course of special pleading with them, by way of proving them

wrong? Are they looking for an earthly Paradise, and seeking to make their home here below? Are they lusting strongly after a position which they have not, while that which they have in the order of GOD's Providence affords an abundant field for usefulness and honourable service? All these are so many uncongenialities of the man's moral nature to GOD, so many divergences of the ever-oscillating needle of the heart from the pole to which it should always point truly. And these uncongenialities must be abolished, these divergences must be corrected, if the man is to love GOD perfectly. Love GOD perfectly he cannot, while contrary loves engage his heart. These contrary loves therefore must be expelled and renounced. And this can only be done by GOD's Spirit within being put forth to cleanse our hearts, and turn them from a cage of unclean birds into a Sanctuary, meet for the service of Praise. And the petition that GOD would by His Spirit effect this result forms the body of this admirable Collect: "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit." We desire that God would bring us into a right frame of mind for the magnification of His Holy Name; and, as in order to this a purifying process is essential, we pray that the purifying process may take effect upon us.

We fall back now upon the doctrine, which is the foundation on which the petition plants itself. And most instructive indeed is the connexion of thought between them, in virtue of which one rises out of the other. We pray GOD to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts. The prayer (like all prayers) is an expression of our dependence upon Him to do that for us, which we cannot possibly do for ourselves. And why can we not do this particular thing for ourselves? Why can we not comply

with that exhortation of the Apostle James, "Purify your hearts, ye double-minded?" It is not only that, apart from God's Grace, we have not the moral power requisite. That is one reason, and a sufficient one; but there is another. We do not know the extent of the evil to be remedied. "The heart is deceitful above all things,"—above the smiling sea of the tropics, above the meteor of the marsh, above the mirage of the desert; and because it is thus deceitful, the depths of its wickedness are unknown to itself. Now if we are unacquainted with our own depravities, if it is only long experience, under the discipline of the Spirit, which gives us even a glimpse into them, how shall we ever hope to cleanse them? The task is evidently as much above our wisdom, as it is above our strength. In undertaking it by ourselves we should resemble a man, who should engage to purify a house, which had been tenanted by sufferers from infectious disease, by the ordinary modes of fumigation and ventilation, being ignorant that an open drain ran underneath it, which sent up its noisome exhalations through the ground-floor into the chambers. If such an one were aware what labour and expense it would cost him to alter the direction of the drain, he perhaps might say, "It is beyond my resources altogether to put that house in a wholesome condition; I must leave it to others better furnished for the enterprise." Well, there is a line of thought very analogous to this sentiment in the prayer before us. We pray GOD to cleanse the corruptions of our hearts on the ground that He, and He alone, knows them thoroughly. Unto Him, we remind ourselves at the outset, "all hearts be open, all desires known," or (as it is in the original Latin of this Collect) "unto Him every movement of the will speaks and hath



a voice" (*cui omnis voluntas loquitur*). Striking expression! Yes; every movement of the human will, every stimulant of a desire, every internal uneasiness which gives rise to appetite, hath an utterance—an utterance clear and articulate—for the ear of GOD. "He knoweth our thoughts afar off;"—sees them, while they are yet rising, pushing their way upward,—sees them before they have yet germinated beneath the soil of the heart. We can only rectify, or strive to rectify them, as soon as we become conscious of them. But His eye can detect them, before they have unfolded themselves in our consciousness; and His hand can reach them at that depth. And therefore under a sense of our utter helplessness to cleanse our hearts for ourselves, we pray Him to exert His knowledge and His power on our behalf, and as He searches the heart and tries the reins, to expel the evil which only His eye fully discerns.

Now is not this first Porch to the Office of the Holy Communion very august and very appropriate? That we should be put into a right frame for the glorification of God, by the cleansing of our hearts from every sinful affection contrary to His Love,—a cleansing which can only be effected by Him, who is privy to our most secret thoughts,—what fitter preparative than this can be imagined for the Church's great Sacrifice of Thanksgiving and Praise?

We have spoken of GOD's privy to the worst corruptions of our hearts. Let us observe, in conclusion, that those who are under the lead of grace He will indoctrinate more and more into a knowledge of themselves. Do not faint, therefore, but rather thank GOD

and take courage, because in the progress of your Christian course, more and more disclosures are made to you of evil in yourself, which you suspected not before. If when we are weak (i. e, in our own apprehensions) then we are strong, the Lord could not deal more graciously with any man than by beating him out of conceit with himself, and teaching him experimentally the plague of his own heart. On no other foundation can the fabric of trust in GOD be securely reared than upon that of absolute and entire self-distrust. Only pray that the disclosures made to you respecting Christ, and the sufficiency of His salvation, and His strength, may keep pace with those made to you on the subject of your own evil. For indeed the knowledge of ourselves without a corresponding knowledge of GOD, would only plunge us into a dark night of hideous despair; and that saint prayed well and wisely, who prefaced his acts of Self-examination by these pregnant words:—

“Show me myself, O Lord, by Thy Holy Spirit;  
But show me also Thyself.”



## LECTURE II.

OF THE DECALOGUE AND ITS RESPONDS; AND OF THE  
PASSAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE COLLECT  
APPENDED TO IT.

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread,  
and drink of that cup.”—1 Cor. xi. 28.

THE introduction of the Decalogue into the Office of the Holy Communion was the work of our Reformers. It has been strongly objected to by those who think it right

to cavil at every liturgical arrangement which was originated at the Reformation; but we are persuaded, and we hope to show, that the objection is utterly groundless; nay, that the Decalogue could not possibly occupy a more appropriate place in any Christian Service. Even if there were nothing to be said from primitive antiquity in favour of its insertion here,—surely the Liturgy of the Church is not to be regarded as something so fixed and stereotyped by primitive practice, that no modifications of it, no adaptations of it, to an altered state of society, or to a different phase of religious sentiment, can ever be admitted. At the Reformation there was a great burst of religious thought, which had hitherto been frozen by the prohibition virtually laid upon the Scriptures, and dammed up by the icy barriers of tradition. It was impossible, under such circumstances, to keep all things as they were, just as in a flood it is impossible to maintain the less stable of the old landmarks. It was desirable not only to purify the Service Book from all superstitious accretions which had gathered over it in the lapse of time, but also here and there, with wise and cautious hand, to introduce certain new and original features. God be praised, who, together with that great revolution of thought, gave us men who were abundantly qualified by learning and ability (as well as by piety) to guide it;—men, on the one hand, not capable of being run away with by the mere impulse of novelty, and yet who knew how to admit such alterations as were manifest improvements. While we fully appreciate the venerable prestige attaching to the Communion Office, as having come down to us, in its main features, from a very early period,—in part from the time of the Apostles themselves,—we will consider carefully this novel element of it, entirely on

its own merits, and judge for ourselves (according to the revealed mind of God in Holy Scripture), whether it has been unsuitably foisted into a place where it has no right.

In the Collect for Purity, appended to the Lord's Prayer, with which the Office opens, we supplicate God before entering upon the Service of Praise and Thanksgiving, wherein especially we magnify His Holy Name, to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, that we magnify it *worthily*. And we recognize our dependence upon Him in this matter by reminding ourselves that He alone knows the heart; whereas from ourselves (such is the implication) our corruptions are often hidden. But as it is in all parts of our sanctification, so it is here. While God only can effect it, we must lend Him the hearty co-operation of our wills. He alone can detect our hidden evil; but at the same time He requires that we should endeavour, as far as in us lies, to detect it for ourselves. The same authority which informs us that "the heart is deceitful above all things," and that the Lord alone searches the heart, enjoins upon us that most difficult and naturally distasteful of all spiritual exercises, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup."

Now by what rule shall we examine ourselves, so as to take the true gauge of our character and conduct? Shall it be by the fluctuating standard of public opinion? Shall it be by the average moral attainments of the society in which we move? Since this will not be the criterion applied to us at the last day, it were worse than useless, in a religious point of view,—it might make us the victims of a miserable delusion,—to apply it now :



“the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

Let it, then, be GOD’S Law, which, enthroned in our own consciences, and appealed to by ourselves, sits in judgment on us even now.—Then here, for that purpose, is GOD’S Law confronting us. Here are the ten fundamental precepts of all religion and morality, which broke upon the ears of the chosen people “amid thunders, and lightnings, and voices, and the noise of the trumpet.”

And thus, as in the Collect for Purity the Church directs us to GOD as the purifier of the heart, and puts into our mouth the prayer that, as He only knows our evil He would correct it,—so here she admonishes us by introducing the Decalogue, to do our own part in this matter faithfully, and not to dispense ourselves from examination of conscience, on the plea that without GOD we can do nothing in this or any other part of our sanctification. That this is the true significance of the position which the Decalogue holds in the Communion Office, I believe to be certain from the following passage of the Invitation :—

“The way and means thereto” (to a worthy participation of that Holy Table) “is, first, to examine your lives and conversations *by the rule of God’s commandments*; and whereinsoever ye shall perceive yourselves to have offended, either by will, word, or deed, there to bewail your own sinfulness, and to confess yourselves to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life.”

Now it is a pregnant suggestion to this effect, that “the rule of GOD’S commandments” stands in the forefront of the Office.

But it may be said, “Admitting that this is the sig-

nificance of the Decalogue in its present position, and admitting, moreover, what cannot be denied, that it is a good and wholesome significance, why select the Decalogue in preference to the preceptive parts of the *New Testament*? The Decalogue is the Law given by Moses; but we Christians have a law given by Christ; and it is the word which He has spoken, not that which Moses has delivered, which will judge us at the last day. Why not rehearse the Beatitudes rather than the Decalogue, as being more spiritual, more searching, more generally redolent of the mind of Christ?"—There is certainly an element of reason and truth in this suggestion. There can be no question that the Law of our Lawgiver,—the Evangelical Law,—reaches far beyond the outward actions to the thoughts and intents of the heart. There can be no question that formal and outward restraint (and most of the Ten Commandments are, in their letter, formal and outward) is not of the character of this new Law;—that its restraint is by rectification of the inward principle, rather than by placing a barrier on the outward conduct. There can be no question that, if we be led by the Spirit, we are not under the Law;—that if we be under the lead of Grace, the Law is dead to us,—dead in its condemning power, having already fastened on our Lord as its Victim; dead, too, in its literal aspect, as a mere husk or shell of outward rules, above which we have risen to the freedom of a spiritual obedience. I say in its literal aspect; for the law may be regarded in two ways, either as a series of literal restrictions, or as wrapping up implicitly the whole of man's duty towards God and his neighbour. It is in the latter aspect, let me remind you, as well as in the former, that the Inspired Writers of the New Testament view the Law. "I



know," says St. Paul to the Romans, "that the Law is Spiritual." And again, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And our LORD, being asked which is the first and great commandment, reduces the whole moral code to a spiritual summary thus: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Let each precept be viewed as a law for the heart as well as for the conduct,—let us read alongside of each the spiritual exposition which the New Testament enables us to make of it,—alongside of the third and ninth commandment, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all," "Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment;—alongside of the sixth, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer;—alongside of the tenth, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth;—alongside of the fourth, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day;—and then the Law, instead of appearing any longer to be a dry framework or skeleton of outward rules, becomes filled in with the warm flesh and blood of an animated and spiritual obedience. And if the law,

as we are solemnly assured by the Apostles and their Master, can only be fulfilled by Love, can the rehearsal of the Law be out of place at this moment, when we are about to celebrate the Feast of Love,—a feast commemorative of the Love of Christ,—symbolical also of the Love which ought to subsist between Christian brethren; nay, a Feast which, when duly partaken of, is the ordained instrumentality of cementing our union both with our crucified Head and all His members? And that the Decalogue in this place is to be regarded in its Christian and spiritual aspect,—as the Law of Love, and which can only be by Love fulfilled,—there is an indication, which must by no means be overlooked, in the responds with which it is interspersed.

We will exhibit shortly the rationale of these responds, and then glance at their meaning.

The responds then stand in exactly the same relation to the Ten Commandments as the “Gloria Patri” does to the Psalms. We make large use of the Psalms in Divine Service, saying or singing them through, from beginning to end, every month. Now the Psalms were originally Jewish Hymns, just as the Decalogue was originally a Jewish code; and if interpreted in the bare letter, without any reference to Gospel blessings, might seem to be quite as inappropriate to a Christian Service as the Decalogue. What have we to do, it might be said, with the triumphs and distresses of David, with the history of the children of Israel, with the Babylonish captivity, or other Jewish interests, which form the subject of so many of the Psalms? And the answer is, that we have nothing to do with these things in their local and circumscribed reference; but that since David and his fortunes are typical of Christ and His fortunes, since the pilgrimage of Israel

is a foreshadowing of the Christian's Pilgrimage, and the Babylonish captivity a figure of the captivity under sin and Satan, from which our Redeemer releases us, the Psalms which treat of these things have for us an undercurrent of spiritual significance; we, as Christians, having our vision purged by the holy Spirit, see in them prophecies of Christ and His Redemption, so that they become in our mouths new songs—old, it may be, in the letter, but sung by us, not “in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit.” And to indicate this,—to show that we attach to them, in reciting them, a Christian significance, at the end of every Psalm throughout the year is repeated “Gloria Patri,” being an ascription of glory to the Blessed Trinity. Now the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity may appropriately be called the full blossom of Gospel Revelation. This is the culminating mystery of our Faith, into the acknowledgment of which we are, by the Lord's commandment, baptized. And, therefore, by reciting a canticle involving this doctrine at the end of each Psalm, we show that we mentally turn the Psalm into a Christian Hymn, and are singing it in its Christian significance. In the Psalm itself its literal and spiritual meanings are mixed up, and cross one another, like the threads in a tissue which is composed of different materials; but in the *end* of each Psalm the spiritual meaning comes out pure and unmixed, just as the ornamental fringe round a piece of tissue might be formed of threads of only one material,—gold, or ruby, or blue, as the case might be. Now our mode of dealing with the Decalogue in the Communion Office is precisely similar. After each of its clauses is said, or sung, a respond which Christianizes the precept, takes it out of the sphere of the Law and plants it in that of the Gospel, recognizes it as part of the

Law of Love. The terms of the Gospel Covenant, as distinct from that of the Law, are thus given by the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, quoting from the Prophet Jeremiah: "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and *write them in their hearts*; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*" You see how evidently the respond is merely a compendious petition that God would fulfil to us the terms of this evangelical Covenant, being merciful to our unrighteousness, and writing His laws in our hearts: "Lord, *have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law; write all these Thy laws in our hearts, we beseech Thee.*" And you see, moreover, how each commandment is Christianized and spiritualized thereby; Christianized,—for in whom, but in Christ, have we redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins? Spiritualized,—for we pray that our *hearts* may be inclined to keep the Law,—that the law may be written in them,—showing that we understand much more by each precept than a mere external restraint upon our actions.

But lest the significance of the responds, in spiritualizing the precepts to which they are annexed, should fail to be discerned and appreciated, it is in a manner forced upon our notice by the wise provisions of the American Liturgy. For, in the first place, after the last respond, a passage of the New Testament is suggested for the recitation of the Minister, in which our Blessed Lord re-



duces the whole law under its two summary heads of supreme love to God and love to our neighbor as to ourselves. This brief compendium of Divine precept is an idea of great importance in connection with the law. No less than four times is it brought before us in Holy Scripture—twice by Christ Himself, and twice by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, echoing the voice of his Master. The Sermon on the Mount had seemed to recognize an equal love to our neighbours with that we bear to ourselves, as almost exhausting by itself “the Law and the Prophets;”—“All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” But on a subsequent occasion, in answer to the lawyer who had inquired which was the great commandment of the law, Christ draws out the truth in fuller detail, assigning to the first table (as he had already assigned to the second) a fulfilment by means of love—only love not by measure and degree, but absorbing all the faculties of human nature;—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”<sup>1</sup> St. Paul

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark (xii. 30) and St. Luke (x. 27) both add (though in different places), “and with all thy strength.” It is a curious consideration whether in this fourfold enumeration of “heart,” “soul,” “mind,” and “strength,” there may not be some reference to the first four Commandments, which (according to the usual view) comprise our duty towards God. To give “the heart” to God instead of giving it to “riches,” “pleasures,” or the other idols of the world, is to fulfil the First Commandment spiritually. To conceive of God as transcending all forms of the imagination, and therefore as not to be adored under any of those forms, is (possibly) to worship Him with “the mind.” To fasten upon Him the sentiment of profound veneration, such as effectually restrains the tongue from profane speaking, may be what is meant by worshipping Him with “the

shows us that in the passage of the Sermon on the Mount, Our LORD had been viewing human duty only in its aspect towards man ; for, though reciting five commandments of the second table, he wholly omits all reference to the first. This is one of his echoes of his Master's voice : "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another : for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet ; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour : therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." And this another : "By love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The importance, then, which the New Testament attaches to the idea of love being a summary of the law, makes it very desirable that the idea should be brought before our minds, when, in the highest office of the Christian Religion, we make use of the law. And how does this summary present the whole law to us under a new and Christian aspect ! What a new life does it give to Christian obedience, to be told that its essential points are not the observance of a series of restrictions, but cordial devotion to GOD, and the same regard for our neighbour which we feel for ourselves. Restrictions of course there are in divine precept ; and the maintenance of them in their integrity is essential to the health and solidity of our obedience. But there is also a quickening spirit soul." While to refrain from worldly labor on the seventh day (as the Fourth Commandment prescribes) may be to yield to Him the homage of "our strength."



in divine precept; in the absence of which, however scrupulously the restrictions may be maintained, our obedience is dead. And this spirit is love. Bones are essential to the soundness and consistency of the bodily frame. But bones, without a clothing of warm flesh, through which the life blood circulates, are the very realization and symbol of death.

But, secondly, the Collect<sup>2</sup> which in the American Liturgy is appended to the recitation of the law, tends to this same purpose of spiritualizing the precept. For we there pray that GOD would "vouchsafe to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of His laws and in the works of His commandments." "Our hearts;"—here is the same reference to the spirituality of the precept, which we have already met with in the responds. Obedience in the mere letter, obedience not yielded by the "heart" (or spiritual powers) of man,

<sup>2</sup> This Collect is introduced by the words "Let us pray." A superficial objection has been often so raised to the frequent introduction of these words in the offices of the Church, on the ground of their being superfluous. It might be asked for example, "Why should the minister say 'Let us pray,' when the people have already been praying that God would have mercy upon them, and write His laws in their hearts?" The answer is, that in the ancient service books there were two kinds of prayer, the responsive, in which the people audibly interchanged petitions with the priest, and the non-responsive, in which the priest offered one or more consecutive prayers of some length, and the people did nothing but follow with their minds, and say *Amen* at the end. The first were called in Latin *Preces*; the second *Orationes*. When the responsive prayers were to break off, and the non-responsive to commence, the Priest gave notice of this change in the style of service by saying "Oremus;"—"Let us pass to the Oratio." This "Oremus" has been rendered in the English Prayer Book, "Let us pray." It is almost equivalent to "Follow me now with your minds, while I recite a prayer for you."

is no obedience at all in the sight of Him “who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins,” and who seeketh to be worshipped “in spirit and in truth.” The mere obedience of a letter of a restraint is the obedience of Balaam, who “could not go beyond the command of the Lord his God to do more or less,” while at the same time his heart went after his covetousness. As, then, mere literal obedience is of no value, we pray God that He would “direct, sanctify, and govern, our hearts,” as well as “our bodies in the ways of His laws.” The word “hearts” may here be taken to imply the two higher elements of our nature, which St. Paul in 1 Thess. 5, and again in Heb. iv. 12, distinguishes as “the spirit” and “the soul.” The spirit is that highest faculty by which we hold communion with God;—it is, if I may so say, God’s point of contact with us. For this faculty we pray that it may be “directed;”—that God would make intimations to it by His Spirit as to what His will is. The soul is the seat of the desires and affections; and for this we pray that it may be “sanctified;”—that by the influence of the Holy Spirit all unholy desires may be mortified, and all pure and good affections excited and fostered in us. And as in the great work of grace the spirit has to be “directed,” and the soul has to be “sanctified,” so the body, being merely the servant of the higher faculties, has to be governed with an absolute and magisterial control; according to that word of St. Paul: “As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members *servants to righteousness* unto holiness.” When the spirit meets with *direction* and the soul with *sanctification* from the Holy Spirit, and when the body is completely under the *governance* of both, then

is every faculty of our nature brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. The idea, then, of spiritual obedience is fully developed in this concise and beautiful Prayer; and observe, further, how the close of it intimates that there is no real safety or preservation for us except in the path of such obedience. The devout aspiration with which the Collect is winged, runs as follows: "That through Thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul." What connection of thought is there between preservation of body and soul, and walking in the ways of God's laws and in the works of His commandments? What but this, that preservation is only to be had in the ways of His laws? It is indeed for Christ's sake alone, and not for our own works or deservings, that this preservation is vouchsafed. It is of Grace, not of works, lest any man should boast. But at the same time it is not to be had except in the strait path of obedience. Out of that path we are never safe, because out of that path we are not "in Christ."

If any thing more were necessary to justify the introduction of the Decalogue into the communion Office, it would be the consideration that without it the Service would lack the completeness which now it has. Were the Decalogue absent, this Office would contain hardly any portion of the Old Testament,—no portion of it necessarily; for those two or three Old Testament sentences which occur in the Offertory might be omitted at the discretion of the Priest. This would be intrinsically a defect; for the Communion is the highest of all offices; and it is meet that in it the Old Testament should be formally recognized as the ground, basis, point of origin

for the New. Moreover, it would be a departure from primitive custom ; for as early as Justin Martyr, a writer of the second century, we find the practice mentioned of reading in the Church the Gospels and Epistles after *the Law and the Prophets* ; and Tertullian, writing at the end of the same century, has these remarkable words, descriptive of the Christian service in his days : “ The Church mixeth the Law and the Prophets with the Evangelical and Apostolical writings, and thence drinketh in the faith.” Liturgically considered, the Decalogue is to be regarded as a lesson from the Law, just as the Epistle and the Gospel are lessons from different parts of the New Testament.

It may be said, doubtless, that though the Law, by the testimony of the New Testament writers themselves, is spiritual in its inner significance, still its tones are stern and harsh, repulsive and forbidding, breathing commination rather than love. And this is more or less true. There is a stern, solemn tone in the very style of the Ten Commandments, which, if I may so say, holds the profane and careless at arm’s length. But is this any objection to them in the present position which they hold ? Is it not rather a recommendation ? We have already instituted a comparison between the Decalogue, as an approach to the Communion Office, and the precinct used for interments which lies around many of our old Parish Churches. And we now recur for a moment to this image. We should desire, no doubt, that our associations with the House of GOD might be all bright and happy. We should desire to connect with the Sacred Building thoughts of delightful hours spent within its walls in communion with GOD through Christ, the experience of which might make us re-echo the sentiments of

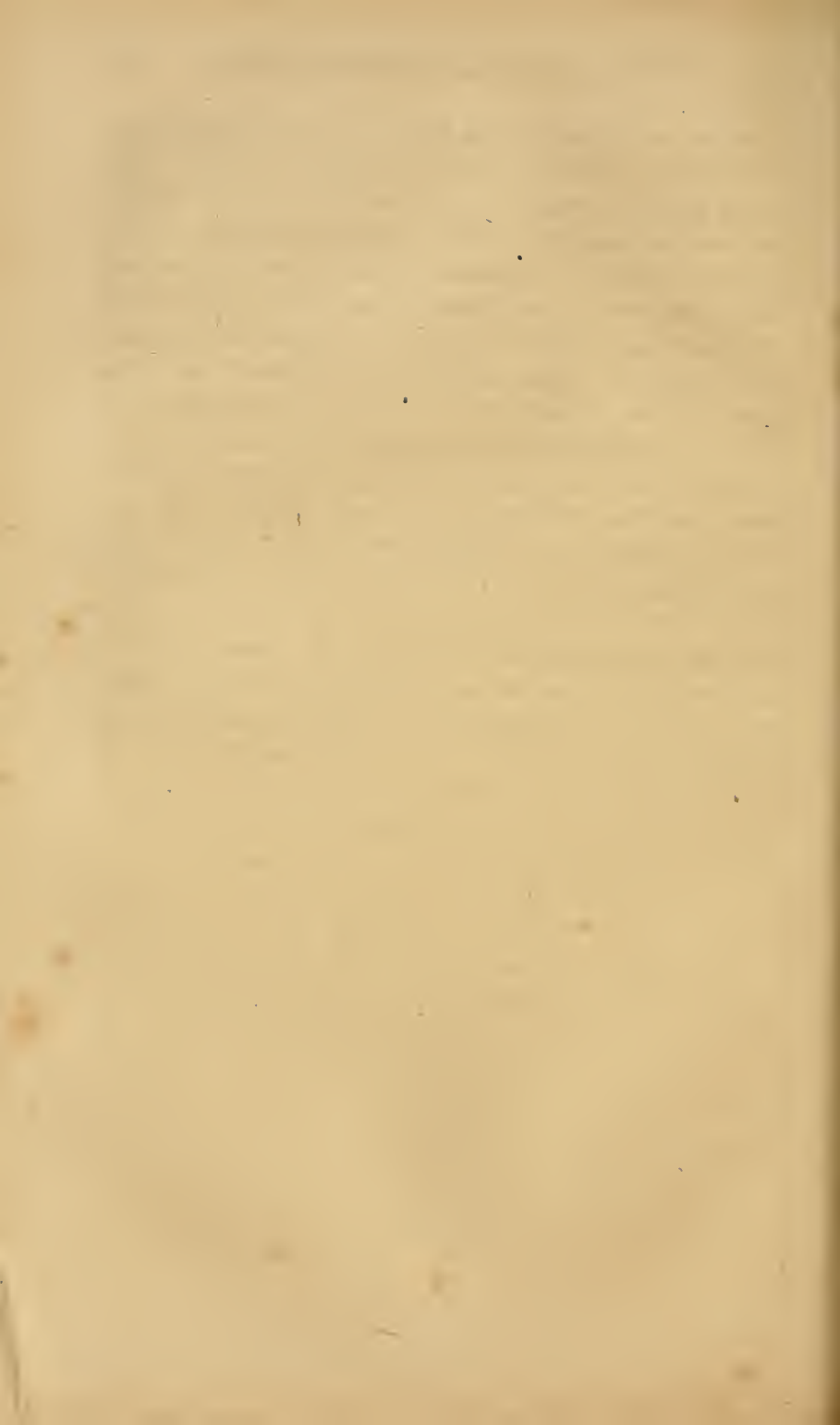


the Psalmist : “ O how amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts ! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord. . . . For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.” But are the stern, chill associations of Death unsuitable as a preparative of the mind, before we enter within the consecrated walls ? Rather the reverse. To be reminded of mortality, of the precariousness of life, of the penalty of sin, and of the havoc it has made, is a fitting and edifying memorial, while our feet are on the threshold of the House of Prayer. Not that those graves can daunt us, now Christ has died. In full sight of them, and in prospect of their yawning one day for himself, the true believer can cry, “ O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? ”

Well, so it is with the Ten Commandments, or Covenant of works, as an approach to the Communion Office. Their stern legal tone excites a solemnity of feeling in the intelligent hearer, by no means inappropriate to the High Office which they introduce. We bethink ourselves that this is a broken law,—a law which in spirit, if not in letter, we have violated over and over again, and every statute of which, understood in the length and breadth of its requirements, is voiceful with condemnation. But what then ? Does the Law frighten us, as well as solemnize our thoughts ? Not for a moment, if we are among those who are led by the Spirit. In that case it is dead to us,—has altogether lost its hold,—and we are not children to be frightened by ghosts. In that case (O great joy and signal triumph !) our Surety and Representative has answered and satisfied all its demands, whether of penalty or righteousness ; and the Law is to us nothing more than the framework of that spiritual

obedience which we owe to Grace. Is it then the case, —this is the question with which we will take leave of our subject,—that we are at present led by the Spirit? Observe, the Apostle's word is "led." He does not say "moved;" for movements of the Spirit, pricks and stings from that inward monitor, are common to all the baptized, and afford no ground of distinction between man and man. Nor does he say "driven" or "compelled" by the Spirit; for to compel a moral agent is to destroy his moral agency altogether, and reduce him to a machine. But he says, "led" by the Spirit,—not merely moved, but following; not dragged, but following freely, willingly, and with loving consent. Thrice happy we, if it be so with us. We may triumph in the Law; for it cannot condemn us. And our communion Feast may be additionally sweetened by the thought that it has been fulfilled for us, and is being and will be, under the guidance of Grace, more entirely fulfilled in us. Amen.





PART II.

THE NAVE.



## LECTURE I.

### OF THE COLLECTS.

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”—ECCLES. v. 2.

WE have already sketched out the divisions of the Communion Service, according to the order in which it stands, and shown the relation to one another of its consecutive parts. But the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, to which we now come, suggest to us a division on another principle. There is, then, a part of the Communion Service, which is constant—used under all circumstances, whatever be the season of the year, and never subject to change: And, on the other hand, there is a variable element in the Service,—a part which alters every week, or on certain high and solemn occasions. This part is composed of the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, and the proper preface.

A distinction of a similar kind runs through the daily Morning and Evening Prayer. The Psalms and Lessons vary every day; the Sunday Morning Lessons not only vary, but are a departure from the orderly course of reading the Old Testament through annually; the Collect, as in the Communion Service, varies every week;

but all these variable elements are inserted into a framework which is constant and fixed.

Before we go further, may we not learn a lesson from what has been already said? Our Liturgy may be regarded as an extended comment on the Lord's Prayer; it is the voice of the Church, subordinately to Christ, teaching us to pray. In the Public Service of the Church, if we will only acquaint ourselves with it thoroughly by study and thought, we shall find hints, many and edifying, for the conduct of *Private Prayer*. All devout persons have at times felt that the outline and general scheme of our prayers cannot vary much. It is not desirable that it should. Every morning we have much the same mercies to acknowledge, and much the same graces to supplicate; every night we have much the same sins to deplore. We say, much the same; not entirely. Even in the most regular and uneventful life one day's course does not quite tally with another's. The day is occasionally signalized by special mercies, special answers to prayer, special temptations, special falls,—all which it is the part of Self-examination to bring to light. When brought to light, how shall we deal with them? The answer is, "Weave into the framework of your ordinary prayers some brief notice of these special occasions." The bulk of your prayer will still be—must be—more or less of a form, by which I mean that it will always run in the same or nearly the same words, or, if not this, will always express the same sentiments; but under the different heads of confession, thanksgiving, intercession, and so forth, you can profitably diverge from the beaten track to notice any particular circumstance, whether of humiliation, gratitude, or special suit for others. The profitable method



of prayer must, after all, be a matter of personal experience; and we confidently appeal to those who cultivate habits of prayer, to tell us whether its spirit is not best caught by *this* method,—variations upon an ordinary framework, by following out in the midst of it any particular leadings of the mind. If so, this is the very lesson which the variable Collects and Psalms of our Liturgy, inserted into its fixed outline, teach us.

But this is by no means the only (or the main) lesson regarding Prayer, which we learn from our Collects.

The passage, which stands at the head of this Lecture, warns the worshipper against two great faults, which vitiate the sacrifice of fools, inconsiderateness and diffuseness. Both faults are traced up by the inspired writer to one root—irreverence. A petitioner coming to sue an *earthly* sovereign, draws up his petition beforehand, and carefully considers the terms of it. And, moreover, in presenting it, he does not allow himself to be tedious to the monarch; his interview would be cut short if he showed a disposition to protract it beyond the natural limits of the occasion. In our petitions to the King of kings, as He sits upon the Throne of Grace, surrounded by all the host of Heaven on His right hand and on His left, we must observe a reverence similar in kind, though proportionably intensified in degree. What we propose to lay before Him must be considered and weighed beforehand; it must not be a hasty wish, or a foolish, ill-considered aspiration; we must be sure so to guard it, if it be a petition for earthly blessings, that the granting it on the part of God may not turn out to us rather a bane than a boon. And, secondly, in stating our desires, we must not be diffuse or rambling. As the Supper of the Lord must not be allowed to degenerate into a common

meal, so Prayer must not be allowed to slip into a familiar colloquy with God, "as a man talketh with his friend." The mind should be braced up to the great exercise, and its tension not relaxed until the exercise is over, and we have quitted the Throne of Grace.

Such seems to be the meaning of Solomon in this most weighty verse; and the sentiment is echoed very distinctly by a greater than Solomon, when announcing His new Law in the Sermon on the Mount. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."

He who in the Agony of the Garden prayed three times, saying the same words, does not for a moment censure as vain *such* repetitions in prayer as flow from fervour of spirit. What He forbids is, that the thought or feeling should be allowed to evaporate and run to waste (as it is the nature of thought to do) in the diffuseness of the language in which it is expressed. He forbids such dilution of the sentiment by multitude of words, as would weaken the sentiment. The value of the Prayer is not to be measured at all by the amount of language employed, but by the fervour of the desire, the solemnity and urgency of the spirit within. And, in expanding this prohibition, our Blessed Lord assigns a reason for it, which draws a distinction between petitions to an earthly Sovereign and those which are addressed to the Majesty of Heaven. The earthly Sovereign might need to be informed of our wants; or at least he might need to have them impressed upon him. But our (Heavenly) Father "knoweth what things we have need of, before we ask Him." He knows our wants in such a manner that they

are ever present to Him, full in the review and contemplation of His infinite mind ; He understands at a glance their urgency and their imminency. Prayer is not for His information at all ; nor can His attention (like that of a finite mind) be distracted by other objects, so as to require to be drawn by vehement and repeated cries to our affairs. He is never “talking,” nor is He “pursuing,” nor is He “in a journey,” nor doth he ever sleep, and need to be awaked. Prolivity, therefore, avails nothing towards the answer of prayer. GOD is a Spirit. Let thy spirit touch His by faith in His love, and wisdom and fatherly care,—by the simple affiance which a child has in his parent, and thou shalt draw forth from Him by a few brief words all that thou needest. This saying of Our Lord is the more remarkable, because, as it stands in the Sermon on the Mount, it forms the point of transition to the Lord’s Prayer. The connexion in which that Prayer is introduced seems to point out that it is designed as a protest against diffuseness and verbiage in prayer : “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all things.” “After *this manner therefore* pray ye : Our Father which art in heaven,” &c., &c. And what a protest ! How much more emphatic and significant, than if our LORD had devoted an entire discourse to expose the futility and irreverence of vain repetitions in Prayer ! We defy you to point out a single word in this Divine Prayer, even down to a particle, a pronoun, or a conjunction, which could be struck out without the forfeiture of an idea and consequent detriment to the sense. The petitions of the latter section are connected by the conjunction *and*, which is not the case with those in the former part. In this slight circumstance there is a great significance, inasmuch as the petitions of the latter sec-

tion flow out of one another with a marvellous sequence of thought: "Give me bread, Lord; yet with it grant me that forgiveness of sins, without which the gift of bread would merely be feeding me to condemnation; aye, Lord, and not forgiveness only for the past, but grace to be stedfast in coming temptations, and to deliver me from the evil in future." Experiment, if you will, upon the first clause of this Prayer, and see what word you can afford to dispense with. Shall it be "Our?" Then your Prayer will be shorn of its Catholicity; it will become selfish; you will no longer recognize men in it as your brethren. Shall it be "Father?" God forbid! This is the most precious word of the whole. Cut it away, and you no more hear in this Divine Prayer the utterance of the Spirit of Adoption. Shall it be the designation of God as "our Father *which is in heaven*," that we may afford to part with? Thus we should lose the insinuation that the Throne of Grace must be approached in a spirit of profound reverence, and the allusion to the words of the wise king in the text, evidently here referred to by the greater than Solomon: "God is *in heaven*, and thou upon earth: *therefore* let thy words be *few*."

Now it is the great praise of the Collects of the Church that they seem to have been framed upon the precept of our Blessed Lord, and upon the model which He proposed; and most candid judges will be of opinion that they approximate more closely to this model than any other prayers framed, as these are, by fallible and uninspired men.

Observe, first, that the Collects are systematic compositions. I mean by systematic that there is a unity of idea in each Collect, to which each clause contributes



something,—one point, and no more, to which all the lines of thought in the short prayer converge. We have already, in a previous chapter, exhibited the platform on which the Collects are constructed,—the invocation,—the recital of some doctrine or fact (in the Sunday collects usually a doctrine, in those for Festivals and Saints' Days, usually a fact), on which the petition, is built,—then the petition, which rises upon this foundation,—then the aspiration which lends wings to the petition,—and then the conclusion. It is immediately seen how regular and orderly this framework is, and how one part of it dovetails into another. Then, again, observe the great terseness of these prayers, how no single word in them is superfluous, how each contributes its quota of meaning to the general effect, how the ideas of a single Collect might be expanded into a prayer of considerable length. These prayers are like those small fragments of gold which lie about in the gold-beater's laboratory. They are but grains in size; yet they admit of being beaten out so as to cover a large surface of Religious Thought.

As, however, observations of this kind are understood much better, when illustrated by examples, than in the abstract, let us take as a specimen the Collect for the Festival of the Epiphany;

“O GOD, who by the leading of a star didst manifest Thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant that we, which know Thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

The fact recited is the fact commemorated by this Festival, that God by the leading of a star did manifest His only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. This is made the foundation of a petition that we, who know GOD now



*by faith*, may *after this life* have the fruition of His glorious Godhead. Observe the nice balancing of the sense here, and how the words are set over against one another. "Now" is opposed to "after this life," and is exactly equal to "in this life." "Knowing God *by faith*" is opposed to "having the *fruition* of His glorious Godhead,"—which is equal to knowing Him by sight, "walking by sight," seeing no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face. But it may not be immediately apparent what is the thread of connexion between the fact recited and the petition based on it;—how the star-guided pilgrimage of the Magi suggests a prayer for our future full fruition of the Godhead. Beyond all doubt the thread of connexion is this; and who will deny that it is a most instructive one? To walk by faith (as we are "now" [or in this life] required to do) is to walk by starlight. To walk by sight, on the other hand, to "have the fruition of the glorious Godhead," will be to walk by sunlight. The pilgrimage of the star-led Magi is a picture or emblem of the walk of Faith. The light of a starlight night is just sufficient to guide our steps by, and that is all. We cannot discriminate colours by starlight, nor see far into the horizon, nor make out more than the obscure outline of objects in our neighbourhood. Would that our Rationalists would bear in mind that, in the walk of Faith, there is light enough, and only light enough, for our practical guidance, abundant light for the purpose of reaching Heaven; but that on most of the speculative questions of Religion, the exact nature of Inspiration, the necessity in reason for the Atonement, the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and of the Eucharist, a cloud must rest for the present, which no exercise of our faculties can dissipate. We walk *now* by

faith, and not by sight. And let the religionist, with whom the consolations of God are at present small,—much smaller than he could wish,—remember that it is enough if, in this dim, dark condition of existence, we have certain foretastes and previous relishes of glory; the broad and genial sunlight, the cheering warmth of God's countenance and smile, in other words the "fruition of His glorious Godhead," is reserved for "*after* this life." If GOD's promises (which twinkle down upon us, like the stars, in the firmament of His Word) be so cheering now, what will the fulfilment of them be? If GOD's love and Christ's grace are so sweet "*now*,"—if "*now*" the Christian is able to sing,—

"Jesu! the very thought is sweet;  
In that dear Name all heart-joys meet;  
But sweeter than the honey far  
The glimpses of His Presence are"—

what may we not expect from the fuller revelation of this Love, this Grace, this Presence, the Power and Beauty of this Name? Lead us on, Lord, to this fuller Revelation! Let us be true (as the wise men were) to the guidance of the starlight which we enjoy, and so may we be brought out hereafter into the full sunshine of Thy countenance!

Now here, in these ideas thus suggested, is the outline of a long and profitable discourse upon that text, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." But the outline is compressed into the smallest possible compass,—the compass of a prayer, which may be written in three lines, and recited in less than sixty seconds. And exactly the same terse-

ness and comprehensiveness of meaning is found in other Collects. Indeed this is not more than an average sample of the significance of these little prayers.

If it be alleged that this excessive terseness is too good for a coarse and superficial understanding, and requires some discipline of mind to appreciate it (just as masterpieces in painting cannot be appreciated by an undisciplined eye), this no doubt is true. We entirely believe that the majority in all our congregations would sympathize more with a diffuse enlargement upon the ideas of a Collect in a long wordy prayer, than with the mere concise utterance of these ideas in the Collect itself. But this is simply because they have never been taught to study the prayers they use, or to look for any depth of meaning in them. The Liturgy is *used* in Church, until the sound of it gets familiar to their ears, but the treasures of it are never explored either by private study, or public exposition. And, further, it is to be borne in mind that whatever objection may be conceived to lie against the Collects for their over-great terseness, lies with tenfold force against the Lord's Prayer itself. The Collects may well be contented to stand or fall in such company.

It is in going through the Communion Office that we have come across the subject of this chapter. The Collect is, and has been from the earliest introduction of this kind of prayer, a part of the Communion Office. And it should be observed that, when it appears in the Morning and Evening Prayer, it is as a memento of that highest office of the Church, of which it is a fragment. Morning and Evening Prayer are, by the theory of our Church, to be said daily throughout the year. The Communion is,

by the same theory, to be reserved for Sundays and Festivals, when an Epistle and Gospel are appointed. But in our daily Service it is contrived, by the introduction of the Collect,<sup>1</sup> that there shall be a continual reminder of that Festival, which is the highest (and which in earliest times was the only) act of Christian Worship. To live in continual preparedness for this Festival is to live in a state of readiness for Death.

To conclude: the prayers of the saints are in the Book of the Revelation beautifully called "golden vials, full of odours." Yet in another passage of the same Book it is said that, when these prayers are offered "upon the golden altar, which is before the throne," "much incense" is offered with them,—a sign, surely, that in themselves they want fragrance, and cannot be a sacrifice of sweet savour unto God. We will lay to heart both these hints as regards our Collects. "Golden vials" they are, as we have seen, formed out of the precious ore (in which there is no dross) of the Word of God, fashioned by learned and devout men with an exquisite skill, and a most perfect and classical taste. Yet in themselves they are but mere empty vials; we,

<sup>1</sup> No part of the ritual mechanism of the West is more worthy of admiration than the means by which the ordinary Office is continually linked on to the Eucharistic. The chief medium for effecting this, and indeed the only one that is of continual application, is the weekly COLLECT. . . . . It is to be observed that our first Collect (at Morning and Evening Prayer) "is not merely a bond of union between our common and Eucharistic Office, but such a one as to present to us the appointed variation of that office for the current week. . . . . The Collect is endued with a wonderful power for carrying on through the week the peculiar Eucharistic memories and work of the preceding Sunday or of a Festival."—Freeman's *Principles of Divine Service*, vol. i. pp. 367, 368.



the worshippers, must throw into them, as we use them, the odours of devout sentiment and pious affection. They are at best only *forms* of prayer; they must be filled with the mind of prayer, before they can be justly called *prayers* of the Saints. Nor, even when filled with this mind, can these prayers be of themselves acceptable. Every thing man touches with his will, understanding, affections, he soils, and renders unworthy of God's acceptance; "all our *righteousnesses* are as filthy rags." "Much incense," therefore, needs to be offered with the prayers of all the saints at the golden Altar, which is before the Throne.

Offer it for us, Thou great High Priest! As often as we are assembled to commemorate Thy full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, present it for us once again before the Throne of God. Plead for us its unspeakable merits and virtues. And Thou shalt not, for Thou canst not, plead in vain. Our prayers, in union with Thine, shall be presented upon the golden Altar; and so united, shall not fail to find acceptance, and to draw down a blessing!



## LECTURE II.

### OF THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS.

"Never man spake like this man."—JOHN vii. 46.

COMMUNION with GOD involves two leading processes. The first is Prayer, in the broad sense of that term,—the access of the soul to its Maker,—its compliance with that invitation, "Draw nigh to GOD." The second is



GOD's address to the soul;—the sounding out of His voice in the depths of the human spirit; in short, the response to Prayer. It follows from this simple consideration, that in any Office professing to be a Communion Office,—an Office, in the use of which the soul may have the highest intercourse with God, which it is possible to have upon earth,—there must not only be “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks,”—in a word, Prayer in its every form,—but also portions of that Inspired Volume, which is GOD's mouth-piece to His people and to the world. A constant lesson from the Old Testament we have in the Ten Commandments; nor perhaps could any single passage of the Old Testament be selected, which contains a more complete summary of the whole. For these Ten Commandments are the nucleus, round which the entire Old Dispensation forms itself,—the very heart's core of that Economy. The fuller and brighter Revelation of the New Testament falls into two great divisions. There are the words and acts (equally significant with words) of our Lord Himself. And there are also the writings of the Apostles, illustrating and expounding the significance of those words and acts. From each of these two sections of the New Testament we read a passage (varying it every Sunday) in the Communion Service. The passage from the first section is called the Holy Gospel. That from the second is called the Epistle, and formerly went by the name of “the Apostle.” It is almost always an extract from the writings of some Apostles; though there is occasionally substituted for this an extract from the writings of the Prophets, who were the Apostles of the Old Dispensation.

We will first say something of the relation to one

another of these two passages of the New Testament, and then of the principles on which the selection has been made.

I. Our Church, while recognizing both Epistle and Gospel as equally parts of God's inspired Word, gives the post of honour to the Gospel. It is called, in announcing it, the *Holy Gospel*; whereas the Epistle is simply called the Epistle. The people are seated while the Epistle is read, but are directed to stand up on the announcement of the Gospel. Moreover, between the announcement and the passage itself the people are directed to say, as if in thanksgiving for some special benefit, "Glory be to Thee, O Lord!" The reading of the Gospel has been attended from the earliest ages of the Church with these and other marks of reverence and honour; and a little thought will give us an insight into the significance of this arrangement.

The general explanation, no doubt, is that higher honour should be done to the words of the Master, who is Christ, than to those of His Servants, the Apostles. This consideration, however, seems to many minds to lose its force, when it is taken into account that the writings of the Apostles were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and were in fact the utterances of the Spirit within them. The fact of Inspiration seems to them to make any difference vanish, which might be conceived to exist in favour of the words of Christ, or indeed in favour of the New Testament above the Old. And thus some persons habitually regard the whole Bible,—Old Testament as well as New,—as being entirely on a level in point of interest, importance, and value;—I mean their theory is so to regard it, although when the theory is pushed to its legitimate consequences,—when, for example, they are

required to accept the proposition, that a genealogy in the Book of Chronicles is of the same interest and importance as the narrative of the Death of the Christ,—they would find it impossible to maintain their theory. Now while we fully and entirely concede that “*all* Scripture is given by Inspiration of God,”—that every sentence of it has an object and a significance of its own (though it may not be always apparent to us what that object and significance may be)—and moreover that there is a living unity in the whole Volume, in virtue of which we justly class together the various compositions in it, and call the whole of them by one name, “The Bible;” we cannot perceive it to be a consequence from these premises that every part of the Bible should be of equal weight and importance. The human body is entirely pervaded by the soul, which is the life thereof; the extremities have life in them as well as the great vessels; and even those parts of the frame which are not endowed with sensibility (like the hair and the nails), even these, so long as animal life is in the body, have the principle of vegetable life abiding in them, and show that they have it by their growth. Moreover, every organ and member of the body has its function; no part of it has Nature made in vain, though it be true indeed that there are certain parts, the functions of which have not as yet been made out by the science of Anatomy. An eyelash, though so slight a thing, has a most important office; and the great number of parts, whose functions are well ascertained, makes it in the highest degree improbable that there should be any part *without* a function. Again; the unity of the body is a well-known and generally admitted fact, which has been made the basis of many illustrations, both in Sacred and Profane Literature.

But while all this is admitted, it cannot be inferred hence that all parts of the body are of equal moment,—that there is as much vitality in the hair as in the veins, or that an operation upon the teeth would be as critical and dangerous as the excision of the pound of flesh, which the Jew proposed to take from the region of the merchant's heart. Now apply this illustration to the matter in hand. The Bible is pervaded by the Spirit of God in its every part. We dare not say of a single text, "The Spirit of God is absent here." We dare not say of a single text, "This text has no use." Even where we may be ignorant of what use it has, the text may serve the purpose (a very useful one surely) of humbling us and teaching us our own ignorance. The Bible, moreover, is one living, organized whole; considering the immense variety of compositions in it,—their difference in style, in date, in occasion, in authorship,—there is a marvellous harmony in its different parts, as is attested by the great body of marginal references in any chapter to remote books. We may admit all this decidedly; and yet fall very far short of saying that one part of the Bible is as precious to us as another, or that we would as soon part with the history of Our Lord's Passion as with St. Paul's message to Timothy to bring his cloak and his parchments.

At present, however, we make these general remarks with a particular reference to the Epistles and Gospels. The fullest recognition of the Inspiration of the holy Apostles, and of their inspiration unto infallibility, does not force us to put their writings on a level with their Master's sayings. The words of Him, who is the Word, are assuredly the highest words ever spoken. "Never man spake like this man." No words are so simple, so



profound, so comprehensive, no words have such a fullness and richness of spiritual meaning, as those of Jesus Christ recorded in the Gospels. In what does the difference between them and the words of the Apostles principally consist? In this, I believe; that each Apostle is appointed, in reference no doubt to his own habit of mind and peculiar character, to bring out one side of Truth; whereas the words of Christ touch Truth on all sides, present no side of it to the momentary exclusion or obscuration of another. St. Paul is the advocate of free Grace; St James of the necessity of holy living. The statements of both are infallibly true, and therefore must be (not perhaps by our poor, clumsy logic, but) to the highest reason perfectly reconcileable. Still they take different sides, as all mere human writers (even though inspired) must do. St. John's theology is tinctured with one leading sentiment, Love, and with one leading instinct, insight into profound truth; he cannot write with the ardour of St. Paul; he must write (in conformity with his own temperament) more calmly, more soothingly, more contemplatively.—But now, if you attempt to characterize Our Lord's words by any one doctrine, or by any one sentiment or habit of thought, or by any one feature of natural character, you feel at once that you fail, and that your description is inadequate. It is simple, pure, crystalline truth that He speaks, uncoloured by the medium of any particular prepossession. He preaches Faith: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that *whosoever believeth in him* should not perish, but have eternal life.” He preaches Works: “All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they *that have done good*, unto the resurrection of life;



and they *that have done evil*, unto the resurrection of damnation." He preaches Love: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from *your hearts forgive not every one his brother* their trespasses." He preaches Heaven: "There is joy *in the presence of the Angels of God* over one sinner that repenteth." "I say unto you, that *in Heaven* their Angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven." He preaches Hell: "It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be *cast into hell*, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." He is continually harping on the Fatherhood of GOD, the most universal (if I may so say) and comprehensive of the doctrines of Grace, in the light of which all differences between man and man vanish;—the most fundamental, too,—that which not only embraces, but accounts for and explains, all others.

The voices of His Apostles are but single parts; His voice is the full harmony which comprises all the parts,—which sums up all truths of GOD. Their doctrines are the component colours; His the sunlight, which embraces in itself all colours. And therefore it is well and wisely ordered that, in the most solemn Service of the Church, a higher honour should be put upon His sayings than upon theirs, and that, as of old "He sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither He himself would come," so now the reading of their writings should prepare the mind for the record of His most significant acts, and for the reception of those words of His, which, according to His own Testimony, "are spirit, and are life."

II. We must now say a word upon the principles on which the Epistles and Gospels have been selected.

Must it not be admitted on all hands that we have in them a collection of very choice passages of the New Testament, such as we should wish most frequently to recur to, not only for the edification to be derived from them, but for their own intrinsic beauty? Is there any New Testament passage of great interest and importance which is not included in these selections, unless indeed, like the 11th of St. John, or the 15th of 1st Corinthians, it is somewhat too long for an extract, and will not easily admit of abridgment? So that we may fairly call these passages the Beauties of the New Testament, justifying that term, if its application to Sacred Literature should seem strange at first, by the considerations which have been just advanced.

These passages, except in Passion Week, where the object is to bring before our minds every detail of Our Lord's Passion, without any abridgment, are all very short. It is part of the principle of the compilation that they should be so. Our Church, by its four daily Lessons on the one hand, and its Epistles and Gospels on the other, would indicate to us that there are two methods of reading Holy Scripture which should be combined in our practice,—a cursory reading, which carries us with bare attention through considerable tracts of it, and a slow reading, which dwells thoughtfully upon particular texts. Now each member of the Church, if so disposed, could profitably avail himself of the last, as well as the first, of these intimations. Dividing the ordinary Epistle and Gospel into six equal portions, we shall get perhaps an average of three verses for meditation on each day of the week. Let these verses be glanced over three

or four times in the morning until they are fixed in the memory. Let us ask ourselves what lessons can be extracted from them, and what prayers can be founded upon them. Let us revert to them during the day, whenever our thoughts are at leisure, and turn them over and over in our minds, so as to examine them on all sides. Thus we shall acquaint ourselves with the Psalmist's specific against sin,—a specific used, we are told, and used, doubtless, with good effect, by the Blessed Virgin Mary: "Thy words have I hid within my heart, that I should not sin against Thee;" "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

Descending rather more to particulars, we find that there are two great divisions of the Christian Year,—from Advent to Trinity Sunday, and from Trinity Sunday to Advent; and that the Epistles and Gospels for the former period set forth chiefly the mysteries of Our Lord's career, His Incarnation, Nativity, Epiphany, Baptism, Fasting, Miracles, Resurrection, Ascension, Mission of the Spirit, Presence in His Church, and the doctrines founded on, or connected with, these historical facts; whereas those for the latter period rather instruct us how to lead our lives after Christ's Example, and to build upon the foundation of holy doctrine the superstructure of a holy life. Thus the doctrinal and practical parts of the New Testament are brought before us in succession, and a protest is made against that wretched narrowness of mind, so common among religionists, which gives an exclusive prominence to one class of favourite texts, and throws into the shade all which present another aspect of the Truth. The Epistles and Gospels are so contrived as to teach us the important lesson that we should keep our minds in a just equilibrium between the various tes-

timonies of GOD'S Holy Word, attaching to each of them their due weight, and looking at each of them by turns full in the face.

The appropriateness of these passages to the particular seasons for which they are appointed, will be best seen by an example. And the example shall be taken from the present season of the Ecclesiastical Year. This season takes its name from the Festival of the Epiphany, which stands at the head of it; and by the word Epiphany is meant the Manifestation of Christ. Now see how this one thought of the Manifestation of the Saviour pervades all the Gospels for this season. Christ is manifested in Infancy to the Wise Men of the East,—manifested by the guidance of a star external to Himself,—for an infant cannot put forth any energies, or exhibit in any form the powers which may be latent in it. This is the Gospel for the Festival itself. But when the infant becomes a child, he then can manifest the dawning powers of intelligence and piety. The Manifestation of extraordinary powers of this kind, while He was yet a boy of twelve years old, is the subject of the Gospel for the first Sunday. The earliest Manifestation of *miraculous* power, resident in the Saviour, when at the wedding in Cana He turned the water into wine, is the subject of the Gospel on the second Sunday. The Manifestations of miraculous power *over disease* by a touch, and by a word, follow in the Gospel for the third Sunday. In that for the fourth, we read of similar Manifestations; first, over inanimate Nature in the winds and the waves; secondly, over evil spirits in the two possessed with devils; and thirdly, over the brute creation in the swine. Hitherto, we have had the Manifestation of the Personal Christ,—a Manifestation, therefore, of unmixed good. But now in the Mani-



festation of the mystical Christ,—of Christ in His Church,—we come across a different scene. The Parable of the Tares, sown amongst the good seed, forms the Gospel for the fifth Sunday; warning us that in the visible Church we must be prepared for much evil alongside of the good, and that not until the end of all things can this evil be eradicated. The Gospel for the sixth (or closing) Sunday introduces us to the period of this final eradication. The last Manifestation of Christ—the Manifestation which alone of all Manifestations will leave no room for doubt or scepticism—will be that of the Second Advent, of which here we read, when “all the tribes of the earth shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Now when attention is called to the orderly sequence of these various passages of Scripture, it is at once seen that there is a design in compiling them. They have not been chosen hastily or arbitrarily; there has been the exercise of thought in selecting them, and great care taken to adapt them to the occasion. And this is one specimen, out of many, which leads us to believe that the more we look into the liturgical arrangements of our Church, the more significance we shall see in them, and the stronger will be our conviction that scarcely any of them (if any) were made at haphazard; that in all there is some trace of the thoughtful wisdom and piety, which seeks not to startle, but to edify.

In the application of our subject, let us remark that the history of Christ must be mystically repeated in the heart of the individual Christian. Is there in progress within us a manifestation of His Love, and Power, and Wisdom, which is ever dawning more and more, from the first glimmer of conviction, to the perfect day of a settled



and established faith? Has our faithfulness to religious impressions, like the faithfulness of the Magi to the guidance of the star, brought us to the feet of the Redeemer, there to do our spiritual homage? Are we discovering more and more of the unsearchable riches of Christ, the treasures of wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, which are in Him laid up? If there be still alive within our corrupt hearts desperate evil, is the true light gaining ground upon the darkness, and making it manifest? Is the good seed encroaching upon the territory of the tares, although for the present tares there are and must be? An affirmative answer to these questions is the one thing which can give us comfort and good hope through grace, in the prospect of that final Manifestation of Our Lord, which must be made to all, when He who cometh shall come, and "every eye shall see Him."

## LECTURE III.

OF THE CREEDS ; AND PARTICULARLY OF THE NICENE  
CREED.

“ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness :

God was manifest in the flesh,  
Justified in the Spirit,  
Seen of angels,  
Preached unto the Gentiles,  
Believed on in the world,  
Received up into glory.”—1 TIM. iii. 16.

THE Creeds occupy in the Communion Service a place analogous to that which they hold in the Morning and Evening Prayer. In both cases the Creeds are introduced after the reading of Holy Scripture ; in the Communion Service, immediately after ; in the Morning and Evening prayer, with the interposition of a Canticle or Psalm. This position of them is significant. “ Faith,” says the Apostle, “ cometh by hearing ; and hearing by the Word of GOD.” The Word of GOD we have just heard in the Lessons, or in the Epistle and Gospel. And having heard it, we profess that faith, which is engendered by it, —the cordial belief of those articles which are contained in it, and which are its sum and substance. Christ has been just announced to us in the Gospel ; some of His gracious acts have been recited in our hearing ; some of His blessed words have fallen on our ears ; and if our hearts have been in a right state while listening, the Lord has seemed to challenge us with the question which He addressed to the blind man, whom He had restored, “ Dost

thou believe on the Son of God?" "Thou hast both heard of Him; and it is He that talketh with thee." And accordingly, we at once reply to the challenge, "Lord, I believe," by repeating one of those formularies of faith, which in ancient times was a watchword whereby the disciples of Christ recognized one another, and were distinguished from the unbelieving world.

To this we may add that the Creed has a peculiar appropriateness in the office of the Communion. At each Communion we renew in our own persons the Vow that was made for us at our Baptism. Now part of this vow was that we should "believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith." A profession of the Christian Faith, then, is most suitable and appropriate, whenever we approach the Lord's Table. In every right approach such a profession of Faith must be *implied*; and in our method of approach it is *expressed*.

But there is an antagonistic feature about Creeds,—and especially about the Creed in this position,—which we must not omit to notice. We are now, it must be remembered, approaching the highest mystery of our Religion,—the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. Now just as in the ancient heathen forms of religion the Priest fenced the mysteries from unhallowed intrusion by exclaiming, "Begone, ye profane;" so in the celebration of the spiritual Sacrifice of the Gospel it is intimated in a very significant way that the holy things of the Church are not for dogs, nor her pearls for swine,—that the profane must hold aloof. But who are the profane, in the estimate of the Lord of the Church? Are they those who are stained with many, grievous, and deliberate sins? Are they those who are harassed by the charges of an accusing conscience? Ah, no! if

such have renounced their sins, and earnestly sought remission of them. Zacchæus is not profane. Magdalen is not profane. The penitent robber is not profane. The profaneness which excludes from pardon is not the profaneness of past sin, but that of present unbelief. Where there is the faith, founded upon the Word of God, which purifies the heart, there is no profaneness. Can you believe, notwithstanding all our falls, in the Father's boundless Love, in the Son's atoning Grace, and in the freely proffered help of the Holy Ghost? Then draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. Nothing but unbelief need bar thine approach. Those only who misbelieve, or who cannot re-echo the Creed from the depths of a penitent and sincere heart, are warned away.

Again, there is something interesting and observable in the middle position of the Creed between the Sermon which succeeds, and the Scripture which goes before it. The Creeds are human and uninspired formularies of doctrine. "We thoroughly receive and believe them" (in the language of our eighth Article), "because they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." But though uninspired, they have the greatest sanction which uninspired Theology can have. They are not expositions of Christian Doctrine by a single divine, however learned, able, and pious.—And here, as it becomes necessary to descend to some detail, we shall confine our remarks to the Nicene Creed, which gives us the Faith in somewhat fuller blossom than the Apostles' Creed, and which exhibits some difficulties not found in the briefer formulary. The earlier part of it was drawn up at the first General Council (that of Nicæa); and at the second, that of Constantinople, it received the

addition of those articles which succeed the words, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." These concluding clauses were already found in Creeds of a date earlier than the Nicene, and only omitted by the Nicene Bishops, as not involving any point then controverted. Now this to a thoughtful and reverent mind is the greatest sanction, short of inspiration, which any such document can have. For the first six General Councils were held before the unhappy rupture which divided Eastern and Western Christendom, and thus represented (what no subsequent Council ever has represented) the mind of the entire Church of Christ throughout the world. Three hundred Bishops at least (the number usually assigned is three hundred and eighteen) came together to the first of them from all parts of the Empire. "Eusebius, himself an eye-witness" (I quote from a modern work, which delineates with admirable picturesqueness), "as he enumerates the various characters, from various countries, of various age and position, thus collected, compares the scene either with the diverse nations assembled at Pentecost, or with a garland of flowers gathered in season, of all manner of colours, or with a mystic dance, in which every actor performs a part of his own, to complete a sacred ceremony." There were Bishops from France and Spain, and Bishops from Syria and Persia; there was Theophilus the Goth from the far North, his light complexion and fair hair contrasting strangely with the tawny features of the Egyptian and Coptic deputies. There were scholars in that assembly, and there were ascetics. There were young deacons in attendance upon their Bishops, whose faith had been hitherto unproved by trial, and there were Bishops who had passed through the fiery ordeal of the last and worst persecution, and had



lost one eye or one leg because they would not renounce the faith of the Crucified.—The occasion must be by all admitted to have been of sufficient importance to warrant a General Council,—for the doctrine controverted was nothing less than the Divinity of Christ, and His Co-eternity with the Father, the necessary condition of His Divinity. The Church was impartially represented ; for Arius himself, and the Bishops of his School of Theology, were present (though in a minority), no less than the champions of the Orthodox party.—What the standard of appeal in deciding the question was, may be gathered from the circumstance that in the middle of the Council Chamber was placed on a seat or throne a copy of the Holy Gospels, and from the well-ascertained fact that every clause of the Nicene Creed is to be found in other Creeds, or authentic records, antecedent to the Council. Thus the Nicene Fathers did not presume to add to the Faith derived from Holy Scripture, but simply reaffirmed it, as it had been hitherto received by the Church.—So that the Nicene Council, and indeed the Œcumenical Councils generally, want nothing *in reason* to make their sentences worthy of all veneration ; they were impartially constituted tribunals, summoned on adequate occasions, and referring to a right standard of appeal. But is it thought that *Scriptural* sanction would make them more venerable still ? Such Councils have scriptural sanction to the utmost extent that any reasonable person can desire. They stand on the sure basis of the Apostolical Council held at Jerusalem, as recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts. The question agitated and determined in that Council was whether the Gentile converts were bound to the observance of circumcision and the whole Mosaic ritual. “ The Apos-

tles and Elders," we are told, "came together, for to consider of this matter;" and the sentence of the Council is announced in this peculiarly solemn formulary: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." It is observable how even in this Council the only two speakers whose speeches were recorded, appeal to previous Revelation, St. Peter alluding to the vision which had led to his connexion with Cornelius, and St. James referring to and quoting the Book of the Prophet Amos in proof of his position. And it is more than observable,—it is a point full of significance and instruction,—that a Council, under such circumstances, should have been thought necessary. The Apostles, the daily associates of our Blessed Lord and Saviour, who had received the truth from His own lips, were yet alive. They were men inspired unto infallibility. They were men on whom the Holy Ghost had descended at Pentecost, in the shape of fiery tongues, endowing them with miraculous gifts in attestation of their mission. Was not each of them by himself a living oracle, perfectly qualified to decide such a question? Why must they come together, "to consider of a matter," which each was competent to resolve? Yet we cannot for a moment suppose that they acted without Divine direction in taking this step. The truth no doubt is that Our Lord wished to give the greatest possible sanction to the united acts of His Church as a Body—the greatest weight to His own covenanted Promise: "Where two or three are gathered in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." Even when inspired men were alive, each member of the Church was only a member; the Body of Christ was not, in the absence of the other members. How much more, then, would this gathering together of the repre-

sentatives of the Church, this discussion and deliberation, be necessary, when Inspiration unto infallibility was withdrawn, and the Christian Community was left to the common aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit ! And if Schisms, and Divisions, and the narrowness of a wretched party spirit, have now made it impossible to call together a Council truly œcumenical, and, even if it were possible, the central authority, whose summons all parts of the Christian world would obey, is wanting ; and if thus Divine Providence puts a bar upon such a settlement of important controversies in modern times ; surely this is no reason why we should undervalue the sentences of those six Councils, which in their day truly and fairly represented the mind of the whole Church, and were adequately constituted. The Nicene Creed records the verdict of the first two of those Councils, and is therefore to be regarded with a veneration, second only to that with which we regard the inspired Word of God. It is an exposition of the most important points in that Word, coming from the mind of the Holy Catholic Church throughout the world. This exposition is in the Communion Service followed by another of a more discursive and diffuse character, and of much lower authority, called the Sermon. The Sermon is an explanation and enforcement of GOD'S Word by a single teacher, ordained indeed, and so deriving his commission through a long succession of links from the Apostles ; but still only able to present the view taken by his own individual mind, and subject always to correction not only from Holy Scripture, but from the sentences of the General Councils. Thus we have in the Epistle and Gospel the Holy Scripture itself, which is immediately followed by

its conciliary exposition in the Creed, and by its pastoral exposition in the Sermon. •

It has been incidentally observed in the present Lecture that several formularies of Faith existed in the Church before the Nicene Council. The language in which these formularies expressed the Truth fluctuated; some are more expanded, some concise; but in substance all of them are much the same. And there can be no doubt that this substance, as distinct from the particular expressions, came down from the Apostles themselves. We find distinct traces of a Creed in their writings. St. Paul exhorts Timothy to “hold fast the form of sound words, which he had heard of him, in faith and love,” “and to keep that which was committed to his trust;” in both which passages it is highly probable that some formulary of Faith of the nature of a Creed is referred to. Under the then circumstances of the Church, when parts of the New Testament did not exist, and the copies of those which did exist were very rare, and multiplied with difficulty, some summary of the teaching of Inspired men, brief, comprehensive, and portable to the memory, must have been urgently in request. And it is probable that St. Paul quotes a fragment of such a summary, when in terms which have an almost rhythmical cadence in the original, and run in parallel clauses, he thus enunciates the mystery of Godliness,—the truth, of which the Church is the pillar and ground: “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

So that not only the synods which framed for us our Creeds, but the Creeds themselves so framed, may appeal to Holy Scripture for their earliest warrants.



Three points in the English Version of the Nicene Creed, which are very generally misunderstood, demand a brief notice here. The first is, that the word “ of ” in the expression, “ God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God,” is not expressive of the superlative degree (as we might call the Bible “ the Book of Books,” or God “ the King of Kings,” meaning the best book, the highest of Kings), but is exactly equal to “ from ; ” and conveys the doctrine that the Second Person of the Godhead (to use the Apostle’s language) is the brightness of the Father’s Glory, standing in the same relation to Him as the light does to the Sun. This sense is conveyed in reading by slightly emphasizing the “ of ; ”—“ God of God,” “ Light of Light.”

The second is, that the words “ By whom all things were made ” have reference not to the immediately foregoing antecedent, “ the Father,” but to the Son, and are merely an echo of St. John’s inspired statement : “ All things were made by Him ” (the Word) ; “ and without Him was not any thing made that was made.”

The third is, that where the Holy Ghost is called “ the Lord, and Giver of life,” the word “ life ” is not to be understood as dependent upon “ Lord,” but merely upon the preceding word “ Giver.” In the original the words run thus, without any conjunction : “ I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the life-giving Spirit.” These words (with all that succeed them) were added to the Creed at the first Council of Constantinople, and their design was to condemn in the most emphatic way the heresy of Macedonius, who taught that the Holy Ghost was a creature, and denied His separate personality. In opposition to these heretics, and in exact conformity with the language of St. Paul, “ Now the Lord is that Spirit,”



the Council protested that the Holy Ghost "is the Lord, the Life-giver." But the force of their protest is lost, or at least much weakened, if in the usual thoughtless and slovenly mode of recitation the two terms are fused together and read without any pause,—“The Lord and Giver of life.” The insertion of a comma in the Prayer Book after the word “Lord,” would vindicate the original sense, and point out the true method of conveying it,—“the Lord, and Giver of life.”

Passing from these (not unimportant) critical remarks to matters of a more practical bearing, we observe that the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, unlike other parts of Public Service, are couched in the first person singular,—“*I believe.*” This is the more remarkable, as it is a variation from the original, which, being the decision of a Council, ran thus: “*We believe.*” The “*I*” teaches us a valuable lesson. Prayer is a matter in which we may materially help one another; in which we are always, even in the privacy of our closets, to bear on our hearts the wants and wishes of our brethren, no less than our own. Therefore when we pray in the form, which the Lord Himself has given us, we say not “*My Father,*” but “*Our Father;*” not “*Give me*” and “*forgive me;*” but “*Give us*” and “*forgive us.*” But belief is a matter purely personal. We must believe each man for himself in the depths of his own spirit. The faith of the Church to which we belong will not save us, nor even comfort us in our spiritual distresses;—only a laying hold of Christ in the inner man of the heart can do that; and therefore we say, “*I believe in One God.*” What an intimation have we here (though conveyed in an indirect way) that the Church intends us to profess, and inculcates upon us, not a mere speculative and historical belief,—not the bare

conviction that these things happened ; but a lively faith, influential upon the character and conduct. You are to recite the Creed, not as one of a multitude of professing believers, but as one whose heart has been reached, and the springs of whose character have been touched, by the glorious truths, to which you give utterance. You are to recite it not as a nominal, but a real Christian. You come out of the crowd, when you repeat it, and profess that you personally, you individually, you by the working of your own mind, have found comfort, peace, satisfaction for every felt need and instinct of the soul, in this glorious old watchword, which has come down to us hallowed by so many associations, and for their faithful adherence to which martyrs have not hesitated to shed their blood.

But the highest aspect of the Christian Creeds has yet to be noticed. They are, then, and have always been accounted, not merely a bulwark against the inroads of heresy, not merely a confession of faith, not merely a watchword for believers, but also a Hymn of Praise. In the ancient Offices, even the Athanasian Creed (a sternly dogmatic formulary, which still finds a place in the English Book of Common Prayer, though not admitted in our own) is called, from what was considered to be its prevailing character, “The Psalm Quicunque vult ;” and being reckoned as a Psalm, it was sung antiphonally, as the Psalms are. And it is a curious fact that in the English Liturgy (though it is not so in our own) the Apostles’ Creed in the Morning Prayer, and the Nicene Creed in the Communion Office, are directed to be “sung or said” (not, as the phrase there commonly is, “said or sung”), as if the preference were given to singing. This may be an accident ; but whether it be so or not, we shall

not err in regarding the Creeds as a burst of praise, and the Nicene Creed as a very grand burst of praise—most appropriate in that Service, which is throughout a Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving. Divided as it is into three Paragraphs, corresponding to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, it is only the Doxology expanded. And it should be said therefore in a spirit attuned to praise, in a jubilant spirit, quickened by the triumphs of Redeeming Love to speak aloud the Redeemer's Glory. Those who love to exalt the Name of Christ,—those who feel (as what true Christian does not feel?) that it is His Divinity which gives efficacy to His Atonement, and lends such peculiar lustre to the whole scheme of Redemption, will not elsewhere find terms better suited to express their sentiments than those on which we have commented, "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made." And there is a grandeur, too, in that confession of the Divinity, of the Holy Ghost, which will approve itself specially to those, who being deeply conscious of the weakness and sinfulness of their own nature, know that no strength short of God's will suffice to give them the victory: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets."

Let it be our aim, then, to join in this part of the Divine Office in a spirit of Holy exultation. Such a spirit will be found to have a reflex action upon our own minds of the most beneficial character. It will strengthen our Christian principle, fortify us against temptation, enable us to cope more successfully with besetting sins.

For it is not with the palsied hands of despondency we can hope to achieve any spiritual enterprise, nor with the tottering feet of a timid, doubting, hesitating faith we can hope to walk bravely and firmly in the ways of the Lord. "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice." "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

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#### NOTE ON THE ETERNAL GENERATION OF THE SON OF GOD.

It was thought by some who heard this Lecture delivered that the Article, "Begotten of the Father *before all worlds*," should receive some explanation, as being a stumbling-block to many. It can be no stumbling-block to any, who have read Bishop Pearson's elaborate and masterly disquisition on the Eternal Generation of the Son, in which he shows that Our Lord is the Son of God not only in respect of His Birth of the Virgin, not only in respect of His Birth from the Grave (or Resurrection), not only in respect of His Inheritance of all things, but also in respect of the communication (from all eternity) of the Divine Essence from the Father, which is far more truly and properly a generation than any natural generation of the creature.

The Scriptural texts which show this are :—

"God sent His Only-Begotten Son into the world."—John iv. 9.

(He was the Son, before He was sent.)

"God sent forth His Son, made of a woman."—Gal. iv. 4.

(He was the Son, before He was born of a woman.)

"The Firstborn of every creature" (or, as it might be rendered, "Begotten prior to every creature").—Col i. 17.

"The Only-Begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of the Father," (evidently referring to Our Lord's position in the Godhead, not to His Birth in Time).—John i. 18.

Bishop Pearson's argument is thus admirably summed up by Professor Harold Brown in his Exposition of the Second Article :—

"Now the communication of the Nature of God, thus made by the Father to the Son, may be called a proper generation. Nay, it is



more proper than any earthly generation. For, in human generation, the son indeed derives his nature from his father, but it is in a manner according with the imperfection of humanity. Man's generation is in time, and, as connected with that which is material, results, in part at least, from that property of matter called divisibility. The son, too, in human beings, when derived from the father, becomes separate from him.

"But this is not so with God. God's eternal perfections He, from all eternity, communicated to his Son. 'So also the Divine Essence, being by reason of its simplicity not subject to division, and in respect of its infinity incapable of multiplication, is so communicated as not to be multiplied, inasmuch that He, which proceedeth by that communication, hath not only the same nature, but is also the same God. The Father God, and the Word God; Abraham man, and Isaac man; but Abraham one man, Isaac another man: not so the Father one God, and the Word another, but the Father and the Word both the same God. Since then the propriety of generation is founded in the essential similitude of the son unto the father, by reason of the same which he receiveth from him; since the full perfect nature of God, is communicated unto the Word, and that more intimately, and with a greater unity or identity than can be found in human generation; it followeth, that this communication of the Divine nature is the proper generation, by which Christ is, and is called the true and proper Son of God.'"—Pp. 66, 67 of the Fifth Edition.

The point proved by the above texts, and learnedly expounded in the above extract, may seem at first of a subtle and abstract nature, such as has a tendency to perplex rather than edify. But see how important a bearing Dogma has upon practice! We should be robbed of a full half of our consolation, if we were not persuaded that Our Lord from all eternity stood towards God in the relation of the Only Begotten. What a pang does it cost a parent to part with an only son,—to part with him to danger, suffering, and death! Yet parents are found, who in a noble cause will make even this sacrifice, though it rends their hearts asunder. God made this sacrifice for the salvation of souls. How intensely must He have loved us, even while we were yet sinners, to tear His Only Son from His Bosom, and send Him down into the pit of our ruin, to agonize and bleed for every man!



## LECTURE IV.

## OF THE SERMON OR INSTRUCTION.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . Preach the Word."—2 TIM. iv. 1, 2.

THE position which the Sermon has always held in Communion Office sufficiently declares its nature. It follows after the Word of God, and after the authoritative conciliary exposition of the Word of God. It is plainly meant, then, to be a commentary upon, or exposition of, that Word,—wanting of course now-a-days the sanction of Inspiration, wanting even the sanction of the authority of the Universal Church; but still delivered under the express commission of Christ, when He gave this parting charge to His disciples: "Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: *teaching them to observe* all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The sermon is (or ought to be) an instruction of baptized persons in all things which Christ commanded, none of those things being omitted, all of them finding a place there in turn. As such, it has the Lord's own warrant, and to that warrant, not to the eloquence or ingenuity of its composition, all its spiritual efficacy is due.

Now here is opened up, at the outset, a line of thought on the subject before us, which may profitably guard us against contrary errors. The sermon is an exposition of Holy Scripture. On the one hand, it has no independent ground of its own to stand upon. On the other, it is not,

and is not designed to be, Scripture itself. An oration not suggested by, or turning upon, the Word of God,—not professing to illustrate its doctrines or enforce its precepts, however able it might be, and however pious and well-intentioned, would not be a sermon. Just in proportion as an address from the pulpit takes up an independent line of thought, not holding of Scripture, in that proportion it is not a sermon. But on the other hand, a sermon is not (as some seem to think it, who cherish a very just horror of the opposite extreme) a cento of texts of Scripture, tacked together with no other connexion than such as a Concordance or a Bible with marginal references might furnish. There must be a play of the preacher's mind upon Scripture to constitute a Sermon. It is to be Scripture, not in its letter and abstract form, but as it presents itself to an ordinary human mind, projected upon it for the purpose of drawing out its lessons. The preacher stands in much the same relation to Scripture as a musician does to the instrument on which he plays. Every conceivable melody is wrapped up in those notes which lie under the musician's hand. Apart from the notes, there can be no melody. Yet the musician has an important part to play in combining the notes. If he were merely to strike a number of them at random, there would be no melody. In like manner the preacher must be a composer from materials supplied to him. All his materials are found in Scripture; there are none beside. But the arrangement of these, the illustration of one by another, the form in which they shall be presented, must be the work of the preacher's mind.

This is a point of great importance; and we must dwell upon it a little more, and trace out some of its bearings. What then is the real substance of the Ordi-

nance (for such it is) of Preaching, as distinct from its form, which is variable, and which circumstances may modify? The substance is this, that God uses fallible and sinful man to teach man. It was of course open to Him to adopt other methods of proceeding; but this is the method which, no doubt on the wisest and best grounds, He preferred. He might send periodically angels from Heaven to instruct us in the way of life. Such an arrangement might not seem to be without its advantages. The great message would always be truly, and purely, and fully delivered; it would never be liable to misrepresentation or perversion. Yet as it was not God's purpose to redeem, so neither is it His purpose to instruct us, by the ministry of angels. And thus much, at all events, we may see of the wisdom of this purpose, that angels having made no experiment of our temptations, and our whole mode of life and thought being of necessity entirely foreign to those among whom sin and sorrow are unknown, they could in no way do aught but deliver their bare message,—they would not possess that key to the heart, which nothing short of a common experience can give. Why is it that European missionaries to the distant heathen see very little fruit of their labours, in comparison of converts from among the natives themselves, who have been instructed and ordained? The reason is obvious. A European has not the key to a Brahman's habits of thought, to a Brahman's associations and sentiments, which a Brahman himself has. Yet the European and the Brahman have a common nature; and if you dug deep beneath the incrustations of outward circumstance and mere intellectual conformation, you would find the same precious ore of human affections in the heart of both. But suppose for a moment the nature of the two

not to be fundamentally the same; how, in that case, would the incapacity of the one to be the teacher and guide of the other be enhanced! The European and the Brahman, if they do not reason in the same method, can at least understand one another's fears, and hopes, and desires; but supposing the difference of their nature prevented their doing this, how little in that case is one of them suited to be the guide of the other in those matters of religion, which touch very closely the conduct and the trials of every-day life! You might give a man a perfect theoretical knowledge of navigation; but if he had never been on board a vessel himself, he would hardly make a very safe pilot. And the Holy Angels, though they may stand on the shore of human life, and watch us with a divine commiseration as we toil in rowing, have never embarked themselves on the waves of this troublesome world.

But while sending to instruct us those of like passions with ourselves, God might doubtless have confined Himself, had He so pleased, to *inspired* men—men secured from error by virtue of their inspiration. And without continuing a succession of such men in the Church, He might (as He has done) have caused their writings to be preserved and collected into one Volume, and might have given us no other guidance than that of this Book of Truth. But the point to which we now call attention is, that it has pleased Him to indicate for us, in this very Book of Truth, another means of guidance. Neither Timothy nor Titus were inspired men; yet they are exhorted to “give attendance to exhortation and doctrine;” “to command and teach” certain truths which they had received from the Apostles; to “divide rightly the word of truth;” to “preach the word;” to “reprove, rebuke,



exhort ;” “ to speak the things which become sound doctrine ;” “ to affirm constantly ” certain faithful sayings. And the things which they have heard from the Apostle they are “ to commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also ;” they are “ to ordain bishops, who shall be apt to teach,” and “ able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” It is clear from the whole tenour of these passages that, over and above the Holy Scriptures, a living Ministry of the Word is provided, to continue for ever in the Church of Christ. But it is not equally clear what the grounds of this arrangement are, nor how easily by our formality and want of reflection we may nullify the provision.

Why, it may be reasonably asked, was not the whole weight of the instruction of Christendom rested on the Scriptures of Truth? Why must commissioned men have any share in it? The Scriptures are infallible ; whereas uninspired ministers are not only fallible, but have often actually fouled the clear well of Scriptural truth with the turbid sediment of their own perverse interpretations. Would it not have shut up one great avenue of error, if Christ had given no commission of teaching or preaching except to His inspired Apostles, and had simply made ordinary ministers chargeable with the ministration of the Sacraments, and the conduct of public worship? Nay ; but God will risk much—much of error, much of infirmity, much of misrepresentation,—if so be He may secure a warm, living, sympathetic, experimental delivery of His message. Even Inspiration places too great a gulf between the inspired teacher, and those whom he is set to instruct ; the teacher will be of more help to the scholar in some respects (not indeed, as an infallible oracle, but as a counsellor in actual trials and emergencies), if both



have only the same ordinary assistances of the Holy Spirit, and if both live contemporaneously, in the same outward condition, and in the same stage of thought. The best of books is but a book, written indeed in the full foresight of future contingencies by the Divine Inspirer, and with the fullest insight into the human heart; but at the same time written long ago, in states of society widely different from any which now exist, and teeming with allusions to manners, and customs, and institutions, which have long since passed away. It will be a help, surely, a great help for the right apprehension of it, if its truths come to us bathed in the dye and rich with the colours of a living experience,—if a single mind, strongly impressed with one or more testimonies of truth, expounds, enforces, illustrates those testimonies in our hearing. What he says may be, nay, almost certainly will be, defective; may require supplementing by other minds, which are drawn more strongly to other sides of Truth; but at all events, from the circumstance of its having taken hold of his mind, it will be conveyed with a force which it would lack, if it were simply read out of the Scriptures. May we say, in illustration of the subject, that Preaching is the appointed ordinance for turning the Word of God into the Voice of God? There is a great difference between a word and a voice. A voice is a living word. A sentence may be written in a book; but it wants emphasis and articulation to bring out to the ear its full meaning and its harmonious rhythm. Preaching is for the emphasizing of the written Word of God; for the fastening close attention on certain parts of it; for the giving it light and shadow, and thus bringing out its doctrines in relief; for the exhibition of the glorious harmony which knits together in unity its various testimonies. Thus

much needed to be said of it, in order to show that it comes into the plan of God for the edification of souls, and that it is no mere ornamental adjunct of the Ministry, but an essential ordinance of it.

And if any thing were needed to vindicate the wisdom of such an Ordinance, surely it would be abundantly sufficient to quote the experience of the Church in all ages. The Scriptures she has always possessed, although it is only since the invention of printing and the general diffusion of elementary education, that this pearl of great price has become accessible to every one who bears the name of Christian. But at certain periods, and in certain parts of the Church at all periods, preaching has been entirely in abeyance; the ministers have been either incompetent from ignorance, or unwilling from indolence, to perform this great function. And what has been the character of those periods, and of those sections of the Church, during such abeyance? A character of entire deadness and abject superstition. Religion has been reduced to a series of rites, which have been regarded by the people with a superstitious awe, but have taken no hold whatever of the understanding and the conscience. It is so now, amidst all the religious enlightenment of the nineteenth century. Churches where there is no preaching are in an impotent, lifeless, and corrupting state. And wherever there is a revival of life in them, there preaching, in one form or another, has been the main instrumentality by which the revival has been brought about. It has been found fallacious (however plausible) to allege: "In all civilized Christian countries are not the Scriptures and good books open to the people?" Experience shows that, though they may be open, they are not read without some additional stimulus. People have not much time

for reading, nor in general much disposition for it. And it comes to pass, accordingly, that the majority hear very little of the Word of God, if their attention is not regularly called to it in Church. Nothing can prove more conclusively than this fact of experience the wisdom of the arrangement which has provided for a succession of uninspired teachers and preachers in the Church of Christ.

But we said above, that by our formality and thoughtlessness we might easily nullify this provision made by God for the edification of His Church. Indeed, it may be so. The great object of preaching being that the Truth of God may reach the people through the mind and heart of the minister, this object is of course frustrated if the mind and heart of the minister be not really brought in contact with the Truth. It necessarily follows from what has been said that, if the Sermon be not (I do not say brilliant or eloquent, but) thoughtful and to a certain extent experimental, there might as well be no Sermon at all. In that case the form of the Ordinance is complied with, but the spirit of it is disregarded. The Sermon is only valuable as an exposition of some truth—or truths—which has taken hold of the preacher's mind, which has at the very least interested him, or (much better) struck him forcibly as a motive to godliness; and if this be not the case, if it is to be reduced to a string of texts, or a mere repetition (in much feebler language) of Scriptural doctrines or precepts, surely the obligation to say something (when there is really nothing to say) might as well be dispensed with. The preacher's office is to give the people the result of his meditation on Holy Scriptures, and thus to guide them in the arduous task of meditating for themselves. But if in no sense he meditates—if he brings neither mind, nor conscience, nor heart to the inspired

passages which he proposes to illustrate—surely the Ordinance is in that particular case liable to be frustrated.

We have seen what the substantial part of Preaching is, and what is the ground of its efficacy. A few remarks may appropriately be added on its outward form. It might be not unreasonably thought that in these days, when admirable works of Devotion are so multiplied, Preaching might be at all events for the educated and reading classes dispensed with. If its essence be the instruction of man by man in Divine Truth, this, it may be supposed, would be as much secured by reading a work of piety (perhaps itself a Sermon) as by hearing a Sermon in the Church. Without questioning that a great blessing may rest (and often has rested) upon the reading of good books, we are unable to assent to the force of this reasoning. It is open to any author to publish a religious work; and if an ordained minister does so, he hardly stands upon his commission when he does it, but rather upon the general right, which he shares in common with others, to put forth whatever he thinks may edify and instruct the public. He is no longer speaking *ex cathedrâ*; and accordingly what he says becomes a mere expression of private opinion, without any official sanction. It is different surely with words spoken from the pulpit. They are spoken in the very theatre of the Ordinances of Religion. He who speaks, although he speaks fallibly, yet speaks in virtue of his commission, and sits for the time being in the chair of One greater than Moses. It is strictly an official transaction; and the office is no less than the ministry of souls. The address is preceded and followed by prayer, and forms, as we now see, an integral part of the highest Service of the Church. In a word, the Sermon here appears in the character which



some would refuse to it, but which we stoutly assert for it,—the character of an Ordinance of Religion, founded on Our Lord's commission to the Twelve, and on St. Paul's charge to the uniuspired Timothy. Surely this is a very much more solemn delivery of God's message than any diffusion of it by means of the press, and one on which His especial Blessing may be expected to attend, whenever the hearts of preachers and people are set to the right key.

And we cannot but think that, upon the whole, the experience of Christians affirms the difference between Truth announced under, and Truth announced independently of, the Divine Commission. Do sermons, when read, usually make the same impression as the same sermons when preached? Or do they seem to have lost something of their fire, and fervour, and special interest? If so, what reason can be assigned for the difference? Doubtless there are certain natural causes in operation to produce the effect. It cannot be disputed that oral delivery, with all its accompaniments of gesture, look, intonation, gives an effect to words, and brings them into a relief, if I may so say, which they cannot have, while they lie flat and mute on the page. But this and other natural laws are probably made subordinate by God, in working out the efficacy of His Ordinance. Grace attends those Ordinances, whenever they are duly administered; and Grace turns the mere circumstantialia to account, and makes them minister to the general effect.

It only remains to remark that but one Sermon is provided for by our Prayer Book; and that this occurs as a part of, and is embraced within, the Communion Office. The circumstance is not without a very important lesson,



which we shall do well to carry away. Our Prayer Book gives us the perfect theory of Divine Worship, as distinct from the disturbances and modifications which circumstances introduce into the theory; and the theory is, that there shall be *but one Sermon* on each Sunday and Festival. The *necessity* of attaching a Sermon (as is usually done) to each Service, arises merely from the fact that a very large portion of our congregations, being unable to come to church in the morning, would never hear a sermon at all, unless one were delivered at the later Services. And the *desirableness* of multiplying these opportunities of illustrating and enforcing the Word of God, arises from a circumstance, which is no necessity at all, but the fault of our age,—the mental indolence of hearers. It is an age, alas! of much hearing, and of much running to and fro in order to hear, but of lamentably little thought. Men like to be stirred by impressive appeals—as many as you please, one dislodging the other incontinently from the mind,—but they do not like to carry those appeals home, to turn them over in their minds, to compare them with Holy Scripture, to extract spiritual nourishment from them by meditation, to found prayers upon them in the week. They will sit passive to receive emotions; but they will not exert themselves to foster those emotions, to consider the grounds of them, to nurse them in the warm hotbed of the heart, till they burst into the green shoot of spiritual life. If we could find now-a-days a meditative hearer, who did not merely submit himself to be wrought upon, but co-operate with the preacher by an effort afterwards to recall, to retain, to ponder, and to pray, we do not scruple to say that in his case one sermon would be more profitable—far more profitable—than two; nay, that the spiritual instincts of such

an one would lead him, after the Eucharist of the morning, to desire nothing more beyond the Evensong of the Church, fully, and decorously, and joyously performed. The real truth is, that a mind seriously occupied with one line of thought resents as an interference the intrusion of another, which is entirely different. But, alas! we have to deal in general with minds too indolent, and too little interested in our great themes, to give them any after-thought, and we must deal with men as we find them, and as the discursive habits of thought now popular have made them; and, without assuming that they will ponder what they hear, must fling abroad much seed of God's Word, to multiply the chances of some seed clinging to the soil.

But it is a shallow habit of mind, that of dismissing the preacher's topic as soon as he has been heard out; and so long as it continues in hearers, it is not to be wondered at that we see little fruit of preaching. God requires of us that we should be in His House something more than mere recipients of impressions. He requires spiritual diligence on our part, before He will bless what we hear to our real furtherance in knowledge and in grace. May we one and all of us lay it to heart! To be hearers of His word is little; nay, only entails upon us an additional responsibility. May He make us intelligent, inquiring, thoughtful listeners, who in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience!

## LECTURE V.

## OF THE ALMS AND OBLATIONS; AND OF THE SACRIFICIAL CHARACTER OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

“I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?”—1 Cor. x. 15—22.

THE Sermon ended, an entirely new feature of the Office of the Holy Communion comes into view, which is thenceforth developed in several different forms. This is the Sacrificial character of the Office, which we propose to exhibit in the present Chapter.

The Priest returns to the Lord's Table, and begins the Offertory, saying one or more sentences of Scripture (the majority of them advocate almsgiving in general; four set forth the claim which the clergy have for maintenance upon those whom they minister), during the reading of which his “Deacons, Churchwardens, or other fit persons, receive the Alms for the Poor, and other devotions of the People, and reverently bring such alms to

the Priest, who humbly presents and places them on the Lord's Table." Then the Priest is directed to "place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine as he shall think sufficient." Both these are offerings by act and deed. The verbal offering follows immediately; for the first petition in the Prayer for the Church Militant runs thus: "We humbly beseech Thee most mercifully accept our *alms and oblations*."

The questions which arise on reading these Rubrics, and which require a brief answer here, are, "What are the *other devotions* of the People, distinct from their alms?" and "What is meant by the *oblations*, as distinct from the *alms*, in the Prayer for the Church Militant?" These are moot points, upon which learned men have disagreed; and I therefore offer my judgment upon them with great diffidence. Moreover, the investigation of these points in your hearing would divert us too much from the great bearings of the subject; and we must therefore ask you to accept our conclusion, without the grounds upon which it has been formed. It appears to us, then, that the compilers of this and other Offices of the Reformed Church have been anxious to keep as far as possible to the primitive model, without providing for any modifications of detail, which the altered circumstances of the Church might from time to time necessitate. In the primitive age of the Church there were devotions of the people, made at the Holy Communion, which did not fall under the head of alms. Not very long ago tithes used to be paid among ourselves in kind; and in quite the old days corn, bread, wine, oil, Church ornaments, robes for the clergy, chalices, and other sacred vessels for the Altar, used to be offered at the Holy Communion, as well as money. This is a well-ascertained fact; and side by side with it is



another fact, which will be found helpful in illustrating the subject.

The Bread and Wine to be consecrated were not, as now, "provided by the Curate and Churchwardens at the charges of the Parish," but were taken by the officiating Priest out of the Bread and Wine brought as an offering (for the sustentation of the Clergy and the Poor) to the great Christian Festival. Let us bear in mind also the circumstance which has been brought before us in a previous Lecture, that in the Apostolic times the Eucharist was celebrated in the course of an actual meal, to which all who could afford to do so contributed a small stock of provisions. These provisions would always partly consist of Bread and Wine, whatever else might be added ; and of this Bread and Wine a portion would be consecrated, for the purpose of the Ordinance ; while the rest would be consumed at the Love-Feast or Supper in connexion with it. Taking these facts into consideration, and weighing what else has been said on either side of the subject, it seems to us that by the words, "*other devotions of the people*," as well as by the word "*oblations*," in the Prayer for the Church Militant, is meant first the Bread and Wine, which have just been placed upon the Holy Table, and which as they are (or ought to be) provided at the charges of the Parish, are an oblation which comes from the people ; and, secondly, any offerings which may be made at that time (whether in the form of money, or in any other shape) for pious purposes, as distinct from the relief of the poor.

Such offerings in these days might take the shape of a contribution (folded in paper, and the object specified) to some of our great Christian Societies, or of an addition to the endowment of a Church, or some aid in the main-



tenance of the current expenses of Divine Worship. For note the direction of the final Rubric in the English office as to the disposal of monies collected at the Offertory: "After the Divine Service ended, the money given at the Offertory shall be disposed of to such *pious and charitable* uses as the Minister and Churchwardens shall think fit." Observe,—not charitable exclusively, but "*pious and charitable*." The money given specifically for charitable uses I take to be the Alms. The money given specifically for pious uses I take to be part of the oblations. But as matters stand now, the principal oblation, and generally speaking the only one, is the Bread and Wine, which are to be placed upon God's Board, as we have seen, immediately after the Alms. When the words, "We beseech Thee mercifully to accept our alms and oblations," follow immediately after these arrangements, it is hard indeed to resist the conclusion that the Bread and Wine are regarded as oblations.

Now this word "oblations" (however we may choose to interpret it) leads us at once to the Sacrificial character of the Eucharist. An oblation is an offering made to God. The first oblations we read of as made in the Christian Church are thus described: "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet."

And that the giving of money or property for pious and charitable uses has a true and real sacrificial character, is shown by plain testimonies of Holy Scripture: "But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." And it is somewhat remarkable that St. Paul, who in the Epistle to

the Ephesians speaks of the Sacrifice of Christ (which surely must stand alone in all its glorious and unapproachable Virtue) as “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour,” does not hesitate, in that to the Philippians, to speak in similar terms of the miserable and flawed offerings, which God condescends to accept from His people for the service of His Church and poor. “I have all, and abound,” says the Apostle, acknowledging the supplies which had reached him through Epaphroditus ; “I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.”

We have no difficulty, then, in justifying from Holy Scripture the words, “We beseech Thee mercifully to accept our alms and oblations.” But the great prayer passes on rapidly to the recognition of another sort of Sacrifice : “And to receive *these our prayers*, which we offer unto Thy Divine Majesty.”

All prayer,—intercessory prayer particularly,—is an oblation. Incense was a constant offering under the Old Dispensation ; and prayer is spiritual incense, an odour of pious affections and desires, kindled by the Holy Ghost upon the heart’s altar, and ascending thence to Him who kindled it. And, accordingly, it is written, “Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense ; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”—For prayer in its sacrificial aspect see also the eighth chapter of the Revelation,—a most precious passage, as showing that angels are employed in sending our prayers aloft, and presenting them before God, and also that it is only in virtue of their union with the much incense of Our Lord’s Intercession that they can possibly

be accepted: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him *much incense*, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne."—Compare also the striking words of the angel to Cornelius: "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." Our prayers, then, in addition to our alms, are a sacrifice well pleasing to God, through Jesus Christ.

But we pass on rapidly to the latter part of the Prayer of Consecration, where we find two more ideas in connexion with sacrifice developed. The first is, that the entire Office of the Communion, the whole act from beginning to end, is "a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." "We, Thy humble servants, entirely desire Thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." For the sacrificial character of praise compare Heb. xiii. 15: "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise of God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name."

The second is, that inasmuch as we renew our vows to God at the Holy Table, and our vows resolve themselves into self-surrender, there is in the Communion a presentation of ourselves as a living sacrifice, according to that word of the Apostle, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

The sum and substance of what has been said is, that

alms, prayer, praise, self-surrender, are all spoken of as sacrifices of the New Testament; and inasmuch as these religious exercises all find a place in the Holy Communion, and all culminate there, the Act which embraces all these in itself must be sacrificial.

But is the Eucharist itself, apart from the devotional exercises with which it is connected, of a sacrificial character? We entirely believe so. We have already seen that the Bread and Wine (which are the materials of the Sacrament) are spoken of, before their consecration, as "oblations," which GOD is besought mercifully to accept. In the American Office they are again offered to GOD, after the hand of the Priest has been laid upon them, in the following terms: "Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of Thy dearly beloved Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, we, Thy humble servants, do celebrate and make here before Thy Divine Majesty, with these Thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto Thee, the memorial Thy Son hath commanded us to make." There is a very precious lesson in this second offering of the Bread and Wine in a new character, which we could not willingly forfeit. When they are first presented, it is simply as offerings made out of our substance towards the Divine Service. But by the imposition of hands they are set apart to signify (and in the case of the faithful to communicate the virtue of) the Body and Blood of our Blessed LORD, and by presenting them to GOD as symbols of that Body and Blood, we plead with HIM (by a significant action) the merits of Christ's Death. The Holy Eucharist, be it remembered, is a memorial of the Lord's Death, made not simply to man and for man's behoof, but made also before GOD's Divine Majesty, to remind Him (if I may so say) of all that



His Son, in our nature, underwent and suffered for us. In prayer we often verbally allege to Him Christ's sufferings as a valid plea for mercy and grace. In the Eucharist we allege the same thing in action. And in this second Oblation of the Elements the allegation is explicitly made: "We do celebrate and make here before Thy Divine Majesty, with these Thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto Thee, the memorial Thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance His blessed passion and precious death, His mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; rendering unto Thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same." A certain Christian sect, the members of which appreciate fully the attractiveness of the Ritual, have felt so deeply the pathos and beauty of this solemn memorializing of God by the presentation of the Consecrated Elements, that the presentation is always made by them in the course of Morning and Evening prayer, even when there is no Communion. A certain portion of the Bread and Wine is reserved for this purpose, and at a certain period of the Service, placed in silence upon the Holy Table. Our Church does not perform this action, except in connexion with, and as part of, the Communion Office. But it may be asked (and it will be anxiously asked by some), "Is the sacrificial character of the Eucharist maintained or implied in Holy Scripture?" We quite believe so. We believe that a full recognition of this sacrificial character is virtually contained in the text; that any candid person, studying the argument of this inspired passage, will not be able to resist the conclusion that the Communion is sacrificial. The Apostle is dissuading the Corinthian Christians from participating in meats that had been offered to idols. He does this by



reference to a principle well known and admitted among the Jews—that those who ate of a sacrifice, part of which had been offered to God, were sharers with the Altar. The part consumed upon the Altar was the Altar's share ; and the Altar represented God, who in sacrifice was supposed to hold communion with the worshipper by a participation of common food with him. Apply this principle, then, to the idol-sacrifices, which are consumed by the heathen worshippers, after they have been presented to the idol. As heathendom is under the dominion of Satan, who is the ruler of the darkness of this world, it is to him and his angels—in short, to devils—that heathen sacrifices are really (albeit unconsciously) offered. The idol, the mere image of wood and stone, is in itself nothing ; but it represents the Devil, who is behind it, and is upholding the great system of idolatry in the world. By eating of an idol-sacrifice, then, a man becomes sharer of the Devil's board, and hath a fellowship with devils. Now, asks the Apostle, is there not a gross and grievous inconsistency, obvious to common sense, in a man's seeking to share both the Lord's Table and the Table of devils? In the Holy Communion, the Christian shares with the Lord. In partaking of the meat offered to idols, he shares with the Devil. “Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy,” by dividing our participation between Him and devils—sharing first of His Board in the Christian assembly, and then sharing of the Devil's Board at some heathen entertainment, a few hours afterwards? Such is manifestly the tenour of the argument.—But does it not virtually imply that the Lord's Supper stands to Christians in the place which idol-sacrifices and Jewish sacrifices held respectively to heathen and Jewish worshippers? Deny this altogether ;

maintain that there is no analogy between a Jewish sacrifice and the Holy Communion, and that there is no such thing as sacrifice competent to worshippers under the Gospel; and do you not cut away the ground from under the Apostle's argument? Whereas admit (what indeed no one would think of denying, except from controversial prepossessions) that the Lord's Table is the Christian Altar, and that the act of Communion is a really sacrificial act, bringing us into communion with Christ, as the eating of idol-sacrifices brought men into communion with the Devil, and as the eating of Jewish sacrifices brought men into communion with the Covenant God of the Jews; and the argument then becomes clear and consistent, and the practical deduction from it inevitable.

The truth is, that the sacrificial character of the Eucharist would be generally recognized by all thoughtful persons, who take the Scriptures as their guide, if it were not feared that the admission would be in favour of the Roman view of the Ordinance. It is a great mischief, uniformly attending upon perversions of the Truth in one direction, that they ensure perversions of it in the other. The Roman Church, 1200 years after Christ, invented the monstrous figment of Transubstantiation, in virtue of which it is pretended (to use the language of our thirty-first Article) that "the Priest" in the Communion doth "offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt." So horrible a blasphemy (for in truth it is nothing less) has very naturally made Protestants altogether suspicious of the application of the term "Sacrifice" to the Lord's Supper; and it is commonly supposed among them that to invest the Ordinance with any such character would

be to obscure the great Offering of Calvary—that “perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction,” which was once made “for all the sins of the whole world,” and which most assuredly can never be repeated. It is asserted also, and generally received as indisputable, without much reflection on the reasonableness of such a view, that the Old Dispensation had sacrifices continually recurring, which were in truth propitiatory; but that the New is distinguished from the Old by the circumstance that the performance of sacrifice by worshippers is abolished, and that the only sacrifice recognized by the Dispensation is that offered by the Eternal Priest. But there is here a large amount of fallacy and confusion of thought, which it will illustrate our subject to disentangle. There is none other satisfaction for sin, then, but the Sacrifice of Christ alone. You cannot make this assertion in terms stronger than the Scriptures warrant. There is no other transaction in Heaven or earth, which can wash away a single stain of sin, or relieve a single burdened conscience, or open a door in Heaven for grace and mercy to stream forth upon guilty man, but merely and exclusively the meritorious Death of Christ. I say, *no other*. No other transaction, whether under the Law or under the Gospel. The Lord’s Supper is utterly powerless to produce these great effects. But neither could the legal offerings produce them. Their incompetence is expressly stated by the Apostle: “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” And what is said of the blood of bulls and goats applies with equal force to any religious transaction whatever, the agents in which are human worshippers and human priests. Oh, that we could see this truth as God sees it! The most

dignified and solemn rite in the world, albeit of Divine Institution, cannot so much as put forth a finger to lighten the load of human guilt, or to arrest the course of God's justice upon the sinner; nor if all the beasts of Lebanon were slain for a burnt-offering, and all its cedar forests hewn down to form a pile, would the vast hecatomb be more efficacious. Why, then, it may be asked, were sacrifices continually offered under the Law, if they could not (as the Apostle assures us they could not) relieve the worshipper's conscience, nor in any way affect the relations between him and God? The answer to this is, first, that such sacrifices were divinely instituted, and were therefore binding upon the ancient Church, whether they could or could not see the ground of them. Secondly, that, as being divinely instituted, they must have been in some degree means of grace. Thirdly, that they were representations, before the event, of the one Offering of the Death of Christ, and, as such, consoled the faithful with the thought that God would, in His own good time, provide a really efficacious Atonement. But now, is there no Ordinance under the New Testament, which exactly meets all these conditions, which is in the first place divinely instituted, in the next place a means of Grace, in the third place a representation (after the event) of the Death of Christ? Can it be denied that our own Church at least (whatever may be the case with the Protestant sects) fully and emphatically recognizes all these attributes as attaching to the Supper of the Lord? Then what is the legitimate and necessary inference? That the Supper of the Lord (though in no sense expiatory) is the Sacrifice of the New Dispensation;—that it is to Memory exactly what the Jewish Sacrifices were to Hope; that here in short,



we have Sacrifice, with its external form altered (as having been brought out into the light of a better Economy), but with its essential features (viz., Divine institution, instrumentality of Grace, representation of the Lord's Death) remaining untouched. The Gospel is a Dispensation of Mercy, and therefore no blood flows in our Sacrifice, as in those of the Law, which worketh wrath. Our Sacrifice is a very simple rite; for the whole character of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is simplicity combined with depth. But it is no less a commemoration of the Death of Christ, after the fact, than the legal sacrifices were a foreshadowing of it, before it took place. The outpoured wine of the one is as significant as the shed blood of the other. "For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's Death, till He come."

It should be added, by way of completing the argument, that the idea of sacrifice being necessarily propitiatory in its character is an entire misapprehension, founded on ignorance (too prevalent unhappily among those who pride themselves upon adherence to Scripture) of the Jewish Levitical Law. Expiation of sin is not the fundamental idea of Sacrifice at all. Sin-offerings and trespass-offerings no doubt there were, in which there *was* a remembrance of sin, and into the idea of which, therefore, expiation did enter as one element of them. But these were only particular species of the genus Sacrifice, which embraced besides burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, drink-offerings, peace-offerings, and freewill-offerings. The fundamental idea of all these varieties seems to be man rendering unto GOD something which pleases and satisfies Him, whether in the way of self-surrender, gratitude, voluntary acknowledgment, or ex-



piation. Man can never expiate ; but it does not follow that, when forgiven and accepted, he cannot offer an acceptable homage.

But one moment remains to give a practical turn to these reflections, by calling attention to that verse, with which the Apostle concludes his warning against participation of idol-sacrifices : “ Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? ” The literal idol-sacrifice has ceased. Yet are there innumerable idols, even in the nominally Christian world, with trains of worshippers who hold communion with them, if not sacramentally, yet in heart and spirit. There is Mammon with his troop of idolaters,—all those who, whether miserly or not, secretly regard the comforts and resources of this world as the one great object of human existence. There is Ashtaroath, with her impure and licentious orgies, drawing votaries to her altars with the lure of sensuality. There is Moloch, to whom human victims are still offered, when children of tender age and young women are ground down by the oppressiveness of a cruel social system, and the employer will give no other terms than long hours and low wages. The sun shining in his strength, the moon walking in brightness, and other objects of natural beauty, have still the power to entice the heart and attract the salutes of many ; for there is a Pantheistic talk making itself heard among us, in circles calling themselves philosophical and refined, to the effect that all things have some particle of Divinity, and rightfully challenge some species of worship. There is Reason, and her throng of worshippers, all following after the ignis fatuus of intellectual power, in whatever form it may display itself, and forsaking the old beaten paths of homely Scriptural Truth. These are all idols, with devils behind them,

maintaining and abetting their worship. Present not yourself to hold communion with Christ, while you communicate with these ; while you are drawn by their fascinations, and do homage at their shrine. Do you provoke the Lord to jealousy? Know that He will not share thy heart with any idol god ; and as often as you approach the Christian Altar, reflect that the condition of partaking of the Lord's Table to the soul's health is, that communion with the world, the flesh, and the devil be first sincerely renounced.



## LECTURE VI.

### OF THE INTERCESSION IN THE PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH MILITANT.

"Exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men ;  
"For kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

IN the Prayer for the Church Militant there are three great features, the Oblation, the Intercessions, and the Commemoration of the Dead. Of the first of these we have spoken sufficiently. The Intercessions next claim our attention.

They are directed to five objects : the general well-being of the Church ; a righteous executive in Christian States ; an effective ministration of God's Word and Sacraments ; a right reception of that Word by the people ; and, finally, the consolation and support of the

afflicted. Thus the precept of the Apostle Paul seems to be very narrowly followed. We intercede first "for all men" (for all, at least, within the pale of the Church); then for "Christian rulers" (under whatever name they may be known), "and for all that are in authority" (spiritual as well as temporal); and then for the people, that they may be virtuous and God-fearing, made so by the instrumentality, partly of a righteous Executive, partly of an efficient ministry ("that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"). We cannot frame an Intercessory Prayer much more closely upon inspired instructions.

1. Our first subject of Intercession is the general welfare of the Church. Alas! how urgent a need of our Prayers has the Universal Church! How miserably far is she from realising the spiritual condition which her Divine Founder designed for her, and prayed that she might be led into and kept in! If you will read with attention His great High-Priestly Prayer recorded in S. John xvii., you will see that there are two great features of this spiritual condition, Truth and perfect Unity. "Sanctify them through Thy Truth," says He, "Thy Word is Truth." And again: "Holy Father, keep through" (literally, in) "Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me" (keep them, that is, in the true acknowledgment of Thy Name), "that they may be one, as we are." And again: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." But how awfully different is the actual state of Christendom from that which Christ contemplated for His Disci-

ples ! Beyond the most vital articles of the Faith, there is scarcely a single point on which the different communions are agreed. In the same Christendom there are the Reformed and Unreformed Churches, the latter anathematizing the former, the former too often confounding license with liberty, and breaking loose from the ancient moorings of Apostolic Discipline and really primitive Tradition. Then there are Churches, properly so called, with the regular succession of the Ministry, and devout Sects without number, who have really formed themselves anew in modern times, and make it their boast that they have shaken themselves loose from all the associations of the Mediæval Church. Nor can we flatter ourselves that to any great extent the distinction is merely nominal,—a distinction without a difference. Long separation, and the cherishing with undue fondness one or two isolated doctrines, has produced a different cast of thought among Christians of different Communion. The English Episcopalian and the Greek, the American Episcopalian and the Nestorian, look at religious Truth from a totally different point of view. Nay, even in the bosom of the same Church, so far from the members being “perfectly joined together in the same “mind and in the same judgment,” there are often found rival Schools of Theology, with party names and party badges, separated from one another, not unfrequently, by antipathies stronger than either of them entertain to persons of a professedly different Denomination. It is easy to acquiesce in such a state of things, and even to make an apology for it, under the conviction that it must be so, while the various Communion adhere faithfully to what they conceive to be God’s Truth. But the answer is, that not merely acknowledgment of the Truth, but



*union* in acknowledgment of the Truth, is the healthy condition of the Church. Christians must not only confess the Truth ; they must *agree* in confessing it. And, on the other hand, it would be easy to bring about union by the compromise of some Scriptural doctrine, a portion, it may be, of the Faith once delivered to the saints. But the objection to this would be, that Christians are bound not only to speak in Love, but to speak *the Truth* in Love. The union of Truth with Love, in the Church of Christ, is the Church's high ideal state, and the ideal which, under present circumstances, it is so peculiarly hard to realise. Mutual acquaintance between members of rival Communion will do something to soften animosities. The cultivation by all Christians of a Catholic Spirit, which acknowledges and gladly hails personal goodness and devotion, wherever it is found, will do more. A clear understanding that the essential Articles of Faith are few, broad, and simple, and that subtleties and nice controversial questions are not among them—such an understanding gaining ground among the thoughtful and educated, will contribute much to the great result. But, after all, “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth.” We shall make no way in removing this gigantic difficulty, unless we apply to it the lever of Prayer. It is God who fashioneth the hearts of all men, and understandeth all their thoughts ; and it is to Him we must make our appeal, if we would have their thoughts directed into Truth, and their hearts into Love. And accordingly, when about to partake of the Feast of Love,—the Feast in which the “one Bread,” distributed among many “partakers,” symbolises the Unity of Christ's mystical Body, the Church,—“We beseech His Divine Majesty to inspire continually the Universal



Church with the Spirit of Truth, Unity, and Concord" (Unity and Concord *through* Truth, as we pray on another occasion, "Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit *by their doctrine*"), and to "grant that all those who do confess His Holy Name may" (not merely agree, but) "agree in the Truth of His Holy Word, and live in unity and godly Love." How faithfully does the Church, praying in such language for herself, echo her Divine Master's Prayer for her: "Holy Father, keep in" [the confession of] "Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are."

Nor let it be supposed that mankind at large are excluded from the benefit of the Church's Intercession, when she holds her Communion Festival. In supplicating the agreement of all who confess God's Name in the truth of His Holy Word, she asks for that which is the ordained instrument of converting the world to the Faith. When, at length, all Christians agree in the Truth, the evidence of Christianity will become irresistible. Too long have the heathen found an argument for unbelief in the allegation that Protestant missionaries have taught a different Religion from the Romanists, and that Christian sectaries invite them to a different form of Faith and Worship from that inculcated by Christian Churches. But in that day, whose coming we anticipate in Faith and Hope, when the Lord shall build up the spiritual Zion in Truth and Love, and the spectacle shall be presented to the world of "Jerusalem built as a city that is at unity in itself," the prayer of the great High Priest shall be fully and finally answered: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be

one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Thus the agreement of the Church in the Truth being made, in the order of Divine Providence, the indispensable condition of the world's conversion, he who prays for the first explicitly, prays also implicitly for the second.

2. The second subject of Intercession in this Prayer is a righteous and effective administration of Justice by Christian Rulers. The order of Intercession indicated in the text, "For kings, and for all that are in authority," points out the Heads of the Body Politic, to whom all orders and degrees of men, ecclesiastical as well as civil, must be subject for conscience' sake, as the first objects of specific intercession. This priority is due partly to the origin of Civil Government, "the powers that be" (and therefore especially the Supreme Power in any State) being "ordained of God;" and partly to its *importance*, the welfare of the Commonwealth depending very mainly on the decisions and acts of its Rulers. And when the character of the authorities of that day is considered, the precept seems to come to us, who live under Christian authorities, in a doubly imperative and obligatory form. The master of the Roman world, at the time St. Paul wrote these words, was one whose name has passed into a proverb of tyranny and wickedness—the odious Nero. If the first Epistle to Timothy is rightly assigned to the year 65, it was in the previous year that the great conflagration had taken place, which laid in ashes three of the four quarters of Rome, and which the tyrannical Emperor (himself suspected of the crime) had made a pretext for the cruel persecution of the Christians. It was with such specimens of authority as these before his eyes that St. Paul, directing a Christian Bishop

as to the celebration of Public Worship in the Church, enjoins in the first place, or as a matter of primary importance, that prayer in all its forms,—special entreaty, solemn address, urgent solicitation, thanksgiving for successes,—should be made in behalf of all that are in authority. The object of these prayers was obvious—more obvious, perhaps, though not (we believe) more real, than is the object of such prayers now-a-days. Christians were then a harassed and a persecuted sect. The temporal authority in those days set its face against them, to root them out of the earth. It was a great point for them to have princes favourably disposed to them, who would allow them the exercise of their religion without molestation. Now the Lord could make any prince thus favourably disposed towards them ; for (as an inspired king informs us) “ the king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters ; He turneth it whithersoever He will.” And if it were turned in favour of the Christians, as it might be by their prayers, then they would “ lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty,” or to express the same thought in the terse language of one of our collects, God’s Church would joyfully serve Him in all godly quietness. There was every ground, then, for praying for the powers that be, that the blessings conferred upon them might redound to the Christians in outward peace and inward tranquillity.

Like most of the ecclesiastical arrangements of Christianity, this practice of offering public prayer for those in authority had its origin in the customs of the synagogue and the Temple. In the Book of Ezra we find a decree of Darius for the assistance of the Jews in rebuilding their Temple, which makes it obligatory upon his subjects in Palestine to furnish them, “ according to

the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem," with victims, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, "that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the GOD of Heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons." This the Jews appear to have done most conscientiously ever after the Captivity; and when they passed under the Roman yoke, the sacrifices and prayers were transferred to the account of their new governors. We find from Josephus that "they offered sacrifices twice every day for Cæsar and for the Roman people." And it is indeed a most observable fact, illustrative of the quietness and peace which may be expected from prayers for rulers, that this same historian Josephus traces up the beginning of the last war with the Romans to the omission, by ill counsel, of the usual sacrifice for Cæsar. The passage is of sufficient interest to be quoted: "At the same time Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, a very bold youth, who was at that time governor of the Temple, persuaded those that officiated in the divine service to receive no gift or sacrifice for any foreigner. And this was the true beginning of our war with the Romans; for they rejected the sacrifice of Cæsar on this account: and when many of the chief priests and principal men besought them not to omit the sacrifice, which it was customary for them to offer for their princes, they would not be prevailed upon." Hereupon, the historian goes on to say, a council was held by the chief priests and principal Pharisees, who besought the innovators to consider that it had been an immemorial custom to receive gifts for the Temple and sacrifices from foreigners, and that the rejection of sacrifices, when tendered by the emperor, would not only irritate the Romans, and bring on a war with them, but also "would introduce a novel



rule of Divine Worship." However, the bigots would not hearken, and the war which originated in their abjuring prayers and sacrifices for Cæsar, ended in the demolition of their Temple by Cæsar, and the abolition of sacrifice altogether.

We have seen that prayers even for heathen Sovereigns were practised by the Jewish Church; that the discontinuance of them—which was a breach of long custom—had a most disastrous result; and that the Christian Apostle St. Paul makes the same practice binding upon Christian assemblies by a precept to which he attaches first-rate importance. Now see how closely our Prayer Book is formed on the Scriptural model.

We are engaged in offering the Christian Sacrifice,—in performing the great Rite, which under the Gospel corresponds to the Sacrifices under the Law, and in the course of which are made oblations of alms, of prayer, and praise, of our souls and bodies. And with these sacrifices of sweet savour, we mingle prayers, as the Jews did of old, "for the king and for his sons,"—nay, and for the whole Church which Christ redeemed with His most precious Blood. Independently of the Apostolic precept, and of the practice of the Church of God in all time, is not this arrangement intrinsically suitable to the occasion? We are about to celebrate the Feast of Love, and we inaugurate it by a prayer of love for all men,—by an expression of sympathy with those who are saddled with a heavy responsibility,—with those who have charge of others,—with all who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity,—yea, an expression of sympathy with, and thankfulness for, those who have departed this life in God's faith and fear.



If our hearts be in such a state that they cannot yield sympathy to our brethren, and so cannot sincerely offer prayer for those of them who still live, or thanksgiving for the departed, can they be in a state fit to avail themselves of the holy Festival?

3. After Intercessions for Rulers, on whom is devolved the government of all orders and degrees of men, follows Intercession for the Clergy, whether Bishops or Inferior Ministers, who act as delegates of the Bishop in certain lower parts of his functions. The petition is very terse, but very comprehensive. There are two great functions attaching to the Christian Ministry, the setting forth of God's Word, and the administration of His Sacraments, and any view of it is incomplete, which does not embrace both these aspects of it. The Minister of Christ is not exclusively a religious teacher, nor exclusively a performer of sacred functions; the mysteries of God, of which he is the steward, are not only the opened mysteries of Divine Truth, but the consecrated symbols also, under which Divine Grace is in a mystery conveyed; the portion of meat which he dispenses to the Household is not only the Bread of God's Word, but the Bread of the Eucharist. And there are two modes of recommending his ministry and making it efficient. Some Ministers, it has been said, preach forcibly by their example, weakly by their doctrine; others forcibly by their doctrine, weakly by their example; few with equal force by both. We pray, therefore, that a holy example in our Ministers may win the way for the entrance of their doctrine into the hearts of the people; that "both by their life and doctrine" (by their life in the first instance, by their doctrine next, according to

those noble lines of Chaucer, in which the “poure persone of a toun” is thus described :

“This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,  
That first he wrought and afterward he taught”),

“they may set forth Thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer Thy Holy Sacraments.” The word “duly” is not pleonastic. The Liturgy is framed on the model of the LORD’s Prayer, and rarely (if ever) has superfluous words. A due administration of the Sacraments is such a performance of the sacred function as omits nothing essential, the performance of them in every particular according to a Scriptural, primitive, and Catholic Ritual. The “right” administration of them refers rather to the heart of the Minister, which should be penetrated, while he executes his great functions, with humility, reverence, and devotion. Hezekiah prayed for those communicants who had not undergone the usual legal purification before eating of his passover. “The good LORD pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.” Before eating our Passover, we pray that those who celebrate it may do so “duly,” with every ritual circumstance enjoined by Christ, and sanctioned by His Church in the earliest and purest age, and, above all things (as the inward is of far greater importance than the outward), with “a heart prepared to seek the LORD.”

4. Then follows the Intercession for Christian People, that they may rightly receive the Ministry of God’s Word, and duly profit thereby. The right reception of it is “with meek heart and due reverence—the reverence, that is, which is due to it,” and which the Thessalonians

accorded, who, “when they received the Word of GOD, which they heard of” (St. Paul), “received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of GOD, which effectually worketh also in them that believe.” But how utterly different is this meekness and reverence from the captious and criticising spirit with which GOD’s Word is too often listened to among us, the spirit which seeks to be interested or amused rather than edified by the Sermon, which looks to the preacher for something which may rather stir thought out of its usual dullness, than the will out of its usual lethargy. It may be a question whether the torpid acquiescence with which some sit beneath a dull preacher, or the curious and critical spirit in which others listen to a lively one, is more remote from the frame of mind in which alone any benefit can be derived from Sermons. Both are probably at an equal distance from “the honest and good heart” of those who hear the Word, and “keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” Fruit! Yes, fruit is the great criterion of a wholesome reception of GOD’s Word. Why is seed sown, but that harvest may be ingathered? Why is GOD’s Word thrown forth upon the soil of the heart, but that the soil in due season may yield all the fruits of the spirit,—that the man may “truly serve GOD in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life”? GOD’s Word is not a mere piece of literature, which has done its whole work upon the mind when it has been perused (or the recital of it listened to) with taste for its beauties and an admiring appreciation of its excellences. Its great object is to quicken and guide the conscience, to move the affections, to set in action the will; in short, to touch the springs of character and conduct; and unless these springs be touched

in the hearers of it, the ministry of it, whatever sensations it may have created, has produced no solid or substantial results.

5. But excellent and exhaustive as the Intercessions of our Liturgy are, it is sometimes felt that they do not attract our sympathy or interest us in the same degree with other prayers. It may be *right* to intercede for our Rulers in Church and State, and to seek God's Blessing upon the Universal Church throughout the world; but, alas! the narrowness of our views and sympathies too often invest such Intercession with a chilly ceremoniousness, and deprives it of all warmth and unction. If, then, we desire a softening element in prayers of this description; if we desire to be brought out of the atmosphere of what may be called official life, into that of our common humanity,—nowhere is this done for us with such simple and touching pathos as in the latter part of the Prayer for the Church Militant. For there the different forms of human sorrow,—that sorrow which makes all mankind of one kin, and puts the Sovereign on a level with the serf,—are brought before the mind; and we implore the Great Healer “of His goodness to comfort and succour all them, who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.” Here is calamity, here is mourning, here is poverty, here is broken health, and if there be any other form of human woe, all presented to the eye of the Divine Compassion in five simple words of intense supplication. To Him who lives environed by the glories of Heaven, and the Hallelujahs of Seraphim, what a lazar-house of miseries must the Earth be! How like a pool of Bethesda, with its great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, and withered,—with its restless pining and



moaning, and its cruelly disappointed hopes! Can we think of this multitude of sorrows without sympathy, without at least a fervent desire to recommend it to God? And if we can think of it so, are we prepared to partake of the Feast of Love? Have we in that case any thing of His mind, who, upon the sight of the deaf and dumb, sighed, as He looked up to Heaven; who wept, as He stood between sorrowing sisters at Lazarus' grave? And if we have nothing of His mind, shall we present ourselves to hold Communion with Him at His Table?

But there is a yet more touching suggestion in this prayer, which can hardly fail to reach the heart. There are those Christians (and some of them possibly among our own nearest and dearest) whose troubles, sorrows, and labours have reached their climax, and who have now passed beyond our sight into that realm beyond the grave, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." If to follow them with prayer were presumptuous, as being beyond the warrant of God's Word, we may at least follow them with thanksgiving. The angels strike their golden harps as fresh souls are won to God in this world. Shall we not suppose that they strike them when those souls are taken home to Him,—released from the body of Sin and Death? And may we not join our poor voices with that angelic symphony? And may we not also implore grace for ourselves to follow their faith, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Yes, surely! it is an unloving spirit, and one totally uncongenial with the mind of Christ and His Church, which would cut us off from this solemn commemoration before God of those who have departed this life in His faith and fear. This is the one exercise of



Devotion by which the communion of living Christians with departed saints,—their fellowship with us of interests, of hopes, of thankfulness, of adoration,—is recognized. As such we believe the Liturgy would be imperfect and mutilated without it. We believe that without this clause<sup>1</sup> in the Prayer for the Church Militant, the heart would crave something which it would not find in the highest Office of the Church. For those who have lost Christian friends, who once walked side by side with them in this troublesome world, cannot banish the thought of such friends in their approaches to God. The departed ones seem to stand on the other side of the river

<sup>1</sup> In the first Protestant Prayer Book (1549) the sentence bidding this Prayer ran merely, "Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church." And a *prayer* for the departed was inserted to this effect:—"We commend unto Thy mercy, O Lord, all other Thy servants, which are departed hence from us with the sign of faith, and now do rest in the sleep of peace; Grant unto them, we beseech Thee, Thy mercy and everlasting peace, and that, at the day of the general Resurrection we and all they which be of the mystical body of Thy Son may all together be set on His right hand, and hear that His most joyful voice: Come unto me, O ye that be blessed of my Father, and possess the Kingdom," &c.

In the Prayer Book of 1552 all mention of the dead was omitted, and to the heading of it were added the words, "militant here in earth."

This alteration was made in compliance with Bucer's strictures, one of which seems somewhat fantastic:—"I should be unwilling in that word—*sleep of peace*—to give occasion of gratifying those who affirm that the departed in the Lord sleep (even as to their souls) unto the last day."

In 1661, after the Savoy Conference, when the doctrine of Purgatory had been extirpated, the present clause *giving thanks* for all those who have departed this life in God's faith and fear, and praying for grace to follow their example, was inserted, and is surely a most valuable feature of the Prayer.

of Death, and beckon us to cross, as they have crossed, under the sheltering wing of the Redeemer. And most precious is the thought that, as they are with Him, wrapt in a communion closer than any which can be enjoyed on Earth, whenever we truly seek Him, we draw nigh (though unconsciously and invisibly) to their spirits. For the nearer the rays of a circle approach to their common centre, so much the nearer of necessity they draw to one another. Christ is the one meeting-point of the faith of the living, and of the sight of the dead; and thus in Him our faith hath communion with their sight. "For we are come" (not *are to come*, but *are come*) "unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."



## LECTURE VII.

### OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE DEAD IN THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

"But ye are come . . . to the spirits of just men made perfect."  
HEB. xii. 22, 23.

IN the Prayer for the Church Militant there are three great features, the Oblation, the Intercessions, and the Commemoration of the Dead. Of the first two of these we have spoken sufficiently. The last is a feature which

requires further development than the passing notice which we took of it in the foregoing Lecture.

The concluding clause of the Prayer, to which we refer, "And we also bless Thy Holy Name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear: beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom," was added at the last Review of the Office, all mention of the dead having been in abeyance from the time of the Second Book of Edward VI., from which intercession for the spirits of the departed righteous (such as had found place in the First Book) was carefully expunged, until the year 1662, when the English Liturgy received its finishing touches. It shall first be pointed out how the addition is justified by Holy Scripture.

In the context of the passage, which stands at the head of this Lecture, the Apostle is warning Christians to beware lest they despise their privileges, and by apostatizing for the sake of worldly comfort or advantage, recklessly throw them away. This would be to imitate the conduct and fate of profane Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For, says he (this seems to be the connexion of thought), your privileges as Christians are high and great,—far greater than those of the Church under the Law. And then he proceeds to enumerate them. They (the Hebrew Christians) had not come to a literal mountain, which might be touched; but to a spiritual eminence, in whose high and celestial atmosphere they had communion with God, with Christ, with angels, with the entire Church of God, whether now in warfare, or at rest, and specifically with the spirits of just men made perfect. Such is the general scope of the

argument. We will now fasten our attention on this particular part of it, which makes for our present purpose,

“Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

Observe first the difference of this representation of Christian privileges from those which are commonly current. Our usual religious parlance places our privileges in the future. Holy Scripture places them in the present. It is the popular phraseology to say, “Good Christians shall come to Heaven hereafter.” Scripture rather says, “Good Christians are come to Heaven already.” The word is (and the translation is here strictly accurate), “Ye *are* come” (or “Ye *have* come”) “unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels;” not “Ye *shall* come.” They had already come, the Apostle says, to a Society, to a Community; and he shows very plainly to every thoughtful reader what are the characteristics of the Society. It is an unseen, invisible, spiritual Society,—one which cannot be reached or apprehended by the senses. But it may be said: “The Church is the Society in question; and is not the Church visible? can it not be seen? When a Christian Congregation meets for worship, is not the Church then visible?” Doubtless there are members of the Church who are still in the flesh; and these we may of course see, and effect a meeting with them in the body. But the bodily meeting, the being assembled in one place, is not the ground of our union even with these. The ground of our union lies much deeper. It consists in our having “One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all,” in our all



belonging to the Body of Christ, in our all being made partakers of one Spirit, and having all one hope of our calling. But the recognition of Christ, faith, hope, acknowledgment of God as Father, membership in the Lord's Body, these things are all spiritual, internal, hidden; and though Christians meet together on earth for Divine Worship, it is not as men in flesh that they meet together, but as having an union of mind, heart, and hope, and being under the influence of the one Spirit of God. The Society therefore of Christ's Church is essentially spiritual, although certain members of it may accidentally have a local connexion, and be clustered together bodily in one and the same spot.

But then this introduces a new thought. Invisible beings may have a true communion with us in the Church of Christ. Why not, if the Church is spiritual and in no sense bodily, if it recognize merely our eternal and not our temporal relations? If angels adore the same Lord, and are earnestly waiting for the same final manifestation of Him as we, if angels by His appointment succour and defend us upon earth, are they not in some sufficient sense members of the same Community, although we see them not? And what of the spirits of the departed righteous? Is it not easily concluded, from the premises already laid down, that our communion with them must be far closer than it was before they were delivered from the burden of the flesh? For then certainly much of sinful infirmity hung about them, which intercepted their view of Christ, and impeded grievously their communion with Him. Now they are with Him in Paradise. Now they see Him no more in a glass darkly, but face to face. Now they drink in joy from the consciousness of His Presence and favour, and are full, as they never were



before, of love and praise. So far from separating them from Him, Death has just eliminated from their nature the one element which did separate them,—which was sin. And accordingly their sympathy with us in our hope of glory, their desire for our salvation, the spiritual concern which they feel in us, must be stronger far and more fervent than ever.

And we must be nearer than ever to them, when we perform spiritual actions. For in the performance of those actions we draw nigh to Christ, with whom they are. In prayer we seek His face, and converse with Him. In reading or hearing His holy Word, He communes with us. In public worship, when we are gathered together in His Name, we place ourselves in His immediate Presence. But the closest intercourse of all which can be enjoyed with Him upon Earth, is that which is vouchsafed to penitent and believing souls in the Holy Communion.—When, therefore, the spirit of the living Christian, by any of these means of access, draws nigh to the Throne of Grace, there is then between him and the spirits of just men made perfect a real nearness, the thought of which should be most consolatory to those whose friends have fallen asleep in Jesus. They are then breathing the same atmosphere of communion with Christ, which those breathe, who are with Him in Paradise. The radii of a circle, in approaching the centre, cannot but, in the nature of things, draw near to one another; and two hearts, though separated by oceans and mountains—yea, though separated by that greater gulf, which divides the seen from the unseen world,—if both approach that great centre of attraction in the spiritual world, “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” cannot but really and truly

draw near to one another, though there may be no outward visible token of such nearness.

Such, then, is the doctrine of Holy Scripture on the subject of our communion with the spirits of just men made perfect. Now every doctrine of Scripture meets, while it regulates, some instinct of the human heart. It is, for example, an instinct of the heart to long for some true sympathy with us from Him, who is the object of our worship. The assurance of this sympathy we find in the doctrine of the Incarnation; and here the instinct in question has its legitimate satisfaction. But it is regulated, as well as satisfied. Like all our instincts it is apt, through the perversion of our nature, to mislead us; and from indulging it too freely, and without restraint from the Word of God, has come Mariolatry and similar corrupt practices of the Church of Rome.—Again, it is an instinct of our nature to long for some outward visible sign of spiritual truths, for some appeal to the senses by the Religion which we adopt. When this instinct goes astray, and is under no regulation from the Word of God, it leads to idolatry. But the Word of God provides for the satisfaction of this instinct, and for its regulation at the same time, by the appointment of the two Sacraments. Here God admits an appeal to the senses, and indicates how far such an appeal may properly go.—Now there is in our nature a craving, which has manifested itself in various forms at various times, for some intercourse with the spirits of the departed, some tokens from them, some assurance of their reality, —with the departed generally, apart from any special relation in which they may have stood to ourselves. In all ages and in all countries tales have been current of apparitions of the dead,—pure inventions most of them,

but showing by their popularity, and by the ready credence lent to them, the strong hold which this instinct has upon the human mind. But may it not be said that it has lost its hold, at all events upon educated minds, in the enlightened age in which we live, when knowledge is so widely diffused, and superstition, one would hope, had taken fairly to flight? Assuredly not. What is the so-called spiritualism of the present day (rightly called *spiritualism*, forsooth, to distinguish it from that, of which it is a perverse and monstrous caricature,—*spirituality*) but an attempt to break a passage between this world and the realm of departed spirits, and to call them back to familiar converse with flesh and blood? It is not to our present purpose to inquire whether the phenomena alleged to be exhibited are the result of clever imposture or of real witchcraft (whichever alternative be chosen by those who profess the powers in question, it is almost equally discreditable to themselves); suffice it that the appearance of such phenomena in the full noontide blaze of scientific knowledge clearly proves how deeply rooted in the human heart is the yearning for communion with the dead. Unregulated, not bridled in with the rein of Reason and of Scripture, this instinct runs away with the mind, and carries it down the dark precipice of a real or pretended necromancy! But the Word of God and the Liturgy of the Church satisfy the instinct, while they control it. The Word of God tells us certain, sober, and most reliable truths concerning the departed righteous,—that they are with Christ in Paradise; and that, therefore, we, by seeking Christ diligently, and cultivating a larger measure of intercourse with Him, may certainly come into their immediate neighbourhood. We are one with them, when we hold true communion with

Our Lord; for “we are come unto the spirits of just men made perfect.” And in the Ordinance, which is the chief instrument of this Communion, our Liturgy, advancing up to, while she does not presume to exceed, the limits laid down in the Word of God, teaches us to think of all those who have departed this life in God’s faith and fear, to commemorate them solemnly before God, to seek grace to follow their example, to aspire to that crown of righteousness, which by faith and patience they have won. But, alas! these truths, this devout practice founded upon them, are too homely, too familiar for us; they savour too much of the Catechism and the Sunday School. We go in preference after signs and wonders, which may excite us with a pleasing trepidation; and instead of thinking of the dead as communing with Christ in Paradise, picture them to ourselves as busy among the furniture of our houses, making noises audible to the outward ear, sweeping their hand over our musical instruments, or spelling out (with many a blunder) secrets, the sublimest of which is not above the range of fortune-telling. Even so the hungering Israelites turned away with disgust from the manna, the angels’ food which fell from heaven, and lusted for the fish and fleshpots of Egypt, which made more of a riot in their blood.

But the natural craving for some intercourse with the dead is of course swollen to much larger dimensions, in case the dead have stood in any special relation towards ourselves. Here comes in the strong instinct of natural affection,—one of the purest and best feelings which has survived the Fall. What a painful bleeding of the heart succeeds the loss of those who have walked side by side with us in the thorny paths of this life, even though we



have good ground for believing that they have been taken to their rest! What a mystery is their removal from us—this moment by our side, full of kindly sympathies with us, and interests for us, and frequent and fervent in the expression of those interests; and now, not ceasing indeed to be animated with the same sentiments, but having no means of communicating them to us! Will no one bring them what the Apostle calls “our earnest desire, our mourning, our fervent minds towards them,” our assurance that they live still in our memory? Oh that in their case it might be permitted to us to rend the veil which hangs before the unseen world, and come at speech of them again! As the being close under a mountain’s brow incapacitates us for judging of its height, so while we are closely mixed up with our friends in the journey of life, we hardly do them justice in our estimate of them. It is not until they stand clear of the collisions and commonplace of daily life, that we seem to catch the real spirit and significance of their character. We see them now with a halo round their brow; taken out of the action of Life, they are idealized; the very thought of them now is softening to us; and we find it impossible to resist any appeal founded on their memory and example.

Such are the feelings and instincts of nature towards our departed friends. Like all our instincts, they may lead us astray. Very early in the history of the Church they began to lead Christians astray. Very early pure Religion began to be flawed and marred by too strong an ingredient of the sentimental. Prayers for the dead crept into the early Liturgies,—not indeed forbidden by God’s Word, but nowhere commanded, and because not commanded, therefore, surely at best questionable. But



worse was still behind, for which this beginning paved the way. No sooner does Prayer for the dead pass from the expression of a mere pious wish (such as St. Paul utters for Onesiphorus in his second Epistle to Timothy, chap. i. 18) into a regular and systematized practice, than the thought intrudes itself that their state is capable of improvement; for else of what avail is Prayer? This thought worked like leaven in the mind of the Church, and developed itself at length in the monstrous doctrine of Purgatory; an imaginary penal fire, which should burn out from the souls of the righteous the relics of sinful infirmity, and whose continuance might be abridged by the faithful intercessions of living friends. Our Reformers, when they addressed themselves to the task of purifying the Liturgy, found this most unscriptural and dangerous doctrine in full blow in the minds of the people. There was no possibility of thoroughly eradicating it but by cutting away root and branch those prayers for the dead, which it must be confessed are found in the earliest Liturgies, but which were inextricably associated with the doctrine of Purgatory in the minds of the people. The eye of these Reformers knew not how to pity or to spare error; so with a wise austerity they took the axe in hand, and all prayers for the dead fell beneath its stroke from the Reformed Office of the Holy Communion. Thanksgiving, however, for the righteous dead, and prayer for grace to follow their example, is a thing wholly different in kind from intercession for them; and as soon as the Reformation was firmly established, it was thought not only safe, but desirable, to add to the Prayer for the Church Militant the clause which commemorates the departed righteous.

And surely it is a precious clause, and one which we

cannot afford to lose. Surely without it the Office would lack its present beauty and perfection. This clause just meets, while it controls, the instinct which leads us to desire a re-opening of intercourse with our departed friends. — It just administers to us the real Scriptural comfort concerning them, and there stops short. For what is the Scriptural comfort? “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” But that this may be a consolation to us, we need to be assured not only that our departed friends are in the Bosom of Christ’s Love, but that we ourselves shall ultimately be gathered into that bosom. The first is a subject of devout thankfulness. The second is a contingency, quite within the reach of faithful prayer. Accordingly we give thanks for the repose of our friends; and then by imploring grace to be followers of them, even as they were of Christ, we aspire to the happy haven, where now those beatified souls, after the storms of the world, ride quietly and triumphantly at anchor. Are they conscious of what we are doing,—sensible that we are bearing them on our hearts, and aspiring to be with them, while we present our homage at the Altar of God? It may be so. But this at all events is certain, that they are now most closely united with Christ; and that whether they are conscious of it or not, we are in their immediate neighbourhood, when we spiritually eat the Flesh of Christ and drink His Blood, when we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, when we are one with Christ and Christ with us. And I cannot but think, although it be only a private opinion, that they *are* more or less

conscious of our nearness. If two harps are set to the same key, and the strings of one be struck, the other vibrates. And if two hearts, having an original sympathy with one another, be drawn towards the same Saviour, probably there may be in both an instinct leading them to recognize their mutual nearness. And the dead, surely, must be more susceptible of spiritual instincts than those who are in the body.

But, looking beyond the small circle of our departed friends, what a grand view of the Communion of Saints does this clause open to us! “For *all* those who have departed this life in His faith and fear,” do we bless God’s Holy Name. *All*,—under the Old Dispensation as well as the New. This clause sets us in imagination in the midst of a great multitude, which no man can number, “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” comprising infinite varieties of human character, yet all of them agreeing in this, that they have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, and hold now in their hands the palm-branch of victory, won by grace over sin and Satan. Venerable patriarchs, the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of martyrs, Abel, and Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Samuel, and Isaiah, and Hezekiah, and St. John, and St. Paul, and St. Peter, and St. Stephen—the same principles of the faith and fear of God animated them all in life, and supported them all in death, although not to all of them was the great Object of faith revealed with equal clearness. What an august company is now with Christ in Paradise, waiting till the elect are numbered, and the grave call Him to come and save!

Let us cherish, in our nearest approaches to the

Throne of Grace the thoughts of joining them at that Day. Let us fortify ourselves by their example; and thinking of them as spectators of the course which we are ourselves running, let us scorn to do any thing unworthy of the good confession which they witnessed in their day, and the record of which is left for our encouragement. But, above all, let us fix our eye steadily upon the great Central Object of Faith,—the Glorified Form, who stands at the end of the course with the garland of victory in His Hand; for it is only by not allowing it to wander from Him, that we too shall prove in the end more than conquerors: “Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, LOOKING UNTO JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH.”





PART III.  
THE TRANSEPT.



## LECTURE I.

### OF THE EXHORTATION AT THE TIME OF THE COMMUNION.

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,  
Neither cast ye your pearls before swine.”

MATT. vii. 6.

THE Exhortations,—both that in the Morning and Evening Prayer, and those in the Office of the Communion,—are features of the Reformed Prayer-Book. But although not ancient, they are valuable, not only from the Scriptural doctrines which they set forth and enforce, but from their rationale, which we will now briefly explain. The Apostle, speaking of Prayer and Psalmody as parts of Public Worship, says, “I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.” The words are applicable to *every* part of Worship, and particularly to the Office now before us, which is the highest part. Those who join in it should strive to combine fervour with intelligence. Not unfrequently in our Churches we see the two things separated. Who has not occasionally remarked among the aged poor an exhibition of unfeigned, heartfelt devotion, leading them to join audibly not only in the responses, but also in those parts of the Service which are specially appropriated to the Priest? Here is fervour without intelligence,—the spirit without the understanding. Educated congregations err for the

most part in the opposite, and worse, extreme. Their education may qualify them to understand the theory of the Service; but instead of throwing heart and soul into it, they are too often kept by a mistaken feeling of propriety, or by an awkward bashfulness, or sometimes by mere indifference to the blessings sought for, from making any response, and the result is an utter deadness in the whole proceeding, a want of fervour and unction, which, when contrasted with the sublime earnestness of the supplications, is painful and distressing in the extreme. Here is intelligence without fervour.—Now at the period of the Reformation, one great want of the Church seemed to be a want of understanding of her own Liturgical forms. The prayers had hitherto been offered, the Communion had hitherto been celebrated, in a “tongue not understood of the people.” Almost all persons needed instruction as to the significance and the contents of the Liturgy, which had degenerated into an unreasonable service. To correct this general ignorance, Exhortations were introduced, the scope of which was to lead the worshippers to prepare their hearts, and which summed up briefly the object and design of the Service. Nor have these exhortations lost their use in modern times, when religious knowledge is more widely spread. The impatience of them, which some persons manifest, when they call them Sermons introduced into the prayers, and imply that they might well be dispensed with, is surely very unwise, as well as very disrespectful to those excellent divines, to whom we are indebted for the reformation of the Liturgy. Does the mind need no preparation, before it enters directly upon the solemn Offices of Religion? And if it be admitted that “Before thy prayers prepare thyself” is a maxim not only of common reverence but

of sound policy, inasmuch as preparation facilitates prayer, can it be denied that the Exhortations in our Prayer Book are admirable preparatives for the Offices to which they introduce us, and that they sum up very succinctly and very scripturally the purport of what is to succeed? The truth is, that if they were listened to,—if the mind were allowed a simple passage over the ideas contained in them, they would not be quarrelled with. But people being in the habit of regarding them as not part of the Prayers (which of course they are not), and as works of supererogation in Divine Worship, no attention is given to them; and since the mind creates for itself its own interests, and is indisposed to create one in reference to this part of the Service, the Exhortations are accounted wearisome. But let the attention be honestly applied to them, and the wearisomeness would vanish.

The Exhortation in the Communion precedes not indeed the whole of the Office, as in the Morning and Evening Prayer, but the more solemn part of it. At the end of the Prayer for the Church Militant there is an obvious break, which is (or ought to be by the directions of the Book) signalized by the retirement of the non-communicants. To recur to an image, which we employed at the beginning of this course of Lectures, we have advanced up the Nave, and now pass into the Transept of the Communion Office, where we gain a full view of the Sanctuary, and place ourselves in front of the steps ("the Comfortable Words") which lead up into it. Here then is an appropriate opportunity of once more warning away those who would be unworthy recipients, and of declaring in what state of heart and mind worthiness consists. Thus for the second time "Begone, ye profane," is sounded in the ears of those who approach



the Holy Mysteries,—a prohibition which had already been less explicitly issued by the stern precepts of the Law, re-echoed by the prayers of the people for mercy and grace.

Taking this warning away of the unworthy to be the salient point of the Exhortation (although indeed it has many points of great interest and importance), we shall make it, and the Scriptural foundation of it, the subject of our remarks in this Lecture.

“Give not that which is holy,” said Our Lord, “to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine.” The term “that which is holy,” is applied in the Book of Leviticus to the meat offered in sacrifice, which no person, who had contracted ceremonial defilement, was permitted to eat. “The soul,” it is said, “which hath touched any such [any unclean thing], shall be unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water.” The same term “holy things” was very early applied in the Christian Liturgies to the consecrated elements of the Holy Communion. These consecrated elements; the holy things of the Church, and her pearls of great price, she will not throw before the dogs and swine; and therefore, acting on her Master’s counsel, she warns those, who are not cleansed by penitence, faith, and love, to abstain from approach to the Holy Table.

Thus the general principle of this warning is laid down by the Lord of the Church Himself. But the particular application of it to the case of the Holy Communion comes to us from the pen of St. Paul, in words which are cited in the Exhortation. The words run thus: “Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood

of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

The excesses of the Corinthians, in connexion with the Supper of the Lord, have been already in a previous Lecture explained. Their sin consisted in treating it as an ordinary meal, "not discerning" (as the Apostle says), i. e., not distinguishing "the Lord's Body" (the Sacrament of the Lord's Body) from common food. To such lengths did their profanation go, that intemperance was sometimes witnessed at the Table, where the Christian Mysteries were partaken of. The sin had its *occasion*, as we have before pointed out, in the original social character of the Paschal Supper, with which the Eucharist was connected; *its root* was to be found in the divisions between the rich and poor of the Corinthian Church, which made the former inconsiderate of the great truth that they were members of the same Body with the latter, and led them to snatch and engross to themselves the whole of the viands, which they had brought with them, and to leave none for those who could not afford to bring to the meeting any of their own. The punishment was severe, though not more so than the sin called for. The Corinthians, so celebrating the holiest Ordinance of Christianity, ate and drank—not "damnation"—(that word conveys a wholly erroneous notion of the original), but "a judgment" to themselves from this unhallowed confusion between things sacred and profane. Some of them were visited with failing health in consequence; others were even stricken by death. Respect-

ing the eternal state of such persons, as nothing is said, we have no means of forming an opinion. All we are told is that they fell ill, or died, by a judgment which their profaneness had incurred.

Now the question arises, "Can this sin be repeated in modern times, and under the altered circumstances of the Church?" To the answer we shall now address ourselves.

I. *In its outward form* the sin cannot be repeated. The precautions now taken render it an impossibility. Far too little of the consecrated elements is now given to satisfy hunger, or to afford the opportunity of intemperance and excess. The prescriptions of the Liturgy bar all disorderly conduct, while the congregation celebrates this holiest rite. Nor, if persons are now-a-days guilty of unworthy reception, do such results ever follow as the judicial infliction of sickness and death. In short, the outward form both of the sin, and of its visitation, was peculiar to the circumstances of the Apostolic Church, and has passed away never to return.

II. It should be considered, however, that it is God's plan in Holy Scripture, on the first appearance of great offence, to make an example of the offenders, which example is not to be repeated, but to stand (as it were) upon the world's highway, a beacon of wrath for the warning of mankind. When Uzzah the Levite presumed to touch the Ark of God, which none but the priests might touch, and which the Levites might not even approach before it had been covered up, "God smote him there for his rashness, and he died by the ark of God." When Korah and his company arrogated to themselves the office of the priesthood, to which they had not been called, the earth swallowed them up, and all

that appertained to them. When, after the promulgation of the Sabbath-Law to the Israelites, and the distinct direction issued to Moses, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day," a man was found flying in the face of the precept, and gathering sticks upon the Sabbath day, "the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp." Thus under the old Economy did God vindicate by a solemn judgment once for all, and leave upon record His vindication of, the sanctity of holy things, holy persons, and holy seasons. And though it is most true that the new Economy is one of mercy, and not of judgment, similar instances must be given under the New Testament, by way of guarding its greater gifts and nobler institutions against irreverence. One of these is the judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira, who were struck with sudden death for a false pretence, made solemnly in the presence of the Apostle Peter. Another is the severe sentence, almost worse than a temporal judgment, pronounced by the same Apostle upon him, who offered money for the power of conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Another is the judgment upon Elymas the sorcerer, who was struck blind for resisting the influence of the Gospel in the heart of Sergius Paulus. A fourth is the judgment, sometimes in the form of illness, sometimes in that of death, which took effect upon the Corinthians, who profaned by excesses and disorders the Holy Supper of the Lord.

Now be it observed that in all these cases, the form and circumstances of the sin are more or less obsolete. In the modern Church there is neither community of goods, nor miraculous gifts, nor sorcery, nor the practice



of combining the Lord's Supper with a social entertainment. Yet it surely does not follow that the passages, which record these several judgments, are without warning for us now-a-days. Is there no warning in the tale of Ananias and Sapphira for persons who now-a-days make an insincere profession before the Church, and the rulers of the Church, like those candidates for Confirmation, who, while they profess to be surrendering their whole heart to Christ, and laying it down at the feet of His minister, are really keeping back a part for the world and for self? Is there no warning in the tale of Simon Magus for those who place the Ministry of the Church, and the gift of Holy Orders, on a level with a secular profession,—who virtually trade with those holy things, by thrusting themselves in with a view to gaining a livelihood? Is no such petition heard in the Modern Church as, “Put me, I pray thee, into one of the Priest's offices,”—not that I may exert my abilities in converting and saving souls, but—“that I may eat a piece of bread?” Is there no warning in the history of Elymas for those who obstruct serious impressions, when just beginning to be made upon the heart of another, by levity, by ridicule, by the insinuation of worldly sentiments and maxims, as the standard to which we ought to conform? In all these cases we must divest the sin of its outward form and look at its principle. And so in the case of the judgment upon the profane and disorderly Corinthians. We cannot, indeed, sin in the same form as they, against the Supper of the Lord. But our sin in respect of that holy Ordinance may embody and express the same principles in another form. Whenever we lightly regard, or allow ourselves to trifle with, this or any other Ordinance of the Lord, we are incurring in greater or less measure,



according to the amount of our levity and inconsiderateness, the guilt of these Corinthians. The extreme form of the sin now-a-days—the form which we may hope it seldom takes—would be the approaching the Lord's Table out of mere deference to custom, or because perhaps the office we hold, or the position we are in, requires it of us—the going through it as a sort of ceremony appropriate to state occasions, with a heart not in the least desirous of the Grace of the Sacrament, and a spirit in no-wise attuned to the beautiful devotion of the Office. Are we wrong in thinking that such a participation is now-a-days very rare? We trust not.—But, next, there may be a participation not upon the whole indevout,—certainly aiming at devoutness,—without such previous preparation, as the dignity and sacredness of the Ordinance requires. This is to be avoided; for, as the Exhortation before us well remarks, we “ought to consider how St. Paul exhorteth all persons diligently to try and examine themselves before they presume to eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.” We are never to forget that there is an inspired precept for preparation, which runs thus: “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.” This precept makes it wrong for us to approach without examination *in some form or another*,—without communing with our hearts on our own faults of character, and an earnest effort and resolve to amend them. But then this examination and self-communing may be with some people habitual. Surely it will be so with those, who are honestly aiming at spirituality, and seeking to live up to the highest standard. It may fairly be presumed that such persons will not usually retire to rest, without throwing back their eye over the past day, and asking a specific pardon for

what may have been amiss in their character and conduct, and a specific grace to correct it in future. Can such persons need a special Examination before the Holy Communion with the same urgency as those need it, who never examine themselves at other times?—Nor ought we to understand by Self-Examination the mere habit of asking ourselves at stated intervals a string of questions, which reduces the great exercise to a formality. If we watch for, and make ourselves acquainted with, the weak points of our own character, and struggle against them in secret prayer; if we apply the Holy Scriptures to our own conscience habitually, comparing or contrasting our frame of mind, and the tenour of our life, with that frame and tenour which they commend to us by precept and example; if, when we read David's Psalms, we ask ourselves how far we sympathize with his love of God's Law, and with his taste for devotion, and when we read any remarkable illustrations of faith and repentance, we seriously inquire how far we are under the operation of the same principles, and found confession, or prayer, or thanksgiving upon the answer,—surely we are not then living without self-examination (for what but this is the intent and purpose of the exercise?) and surely our state is in that case one of habitual preparedness for the Supper of the Lord. It is, of course, a very different thing, if our daily private prayers be the mere repetition of a form; if we seldom read Holy Scripture, and seldom apply it to our consciences; if we acquiesce in our faults of character and temper, as something which must necessarily accompany us to our grave, and do not strive to correct them; if (in a word) we do not, in our daily life, seek to walk closely with God. The Supper is, no doubt, then profaned, if we approach it without a special pe-

riod of devout preparation,—if we do not at least do at stated intervals what we ought to be doing continually.—And to *all* we may say, on the ground of St. Paul's warning to the Corinthians, "Cultivate in your minds a high and holy estimate of this blessed Sacrament; and allow nothing to lower this estimate." If you honestly find that frequency of repetition detracts from the sacredness of the Ordinance in your own mind; and if you are quite sure that you are not confounding liveliness of impression with that strengthening of Christian Principle, which is the great object of the Ordinance, then make your Communions less frequent. Nothing is expressly ruled in Scripture respecting the frequency of the Ordinance;—and accordingly the Christian is left on this point to his own spiritual instincts, which will however surely be formed on such passages as these: "My Flesh is meat indeed, and my Blood is drink indeed;" "The Cup which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?" and on the illustration which such passages derive from the practice of the Early Church. Every man in this matter must direct himself, after having the elements which enter into a right decision laid before him. The fact of there being in many Churches (as among ourselves) a celebration of the Communion on every Sunday and Festival, is not to be construed as implying that it is expedient for all persons indiscriminately to communicate so often. My feeling in our own case is that, where there are many Clergy (as through the great kindness of a friend there are in this Parish) the people have a right to demand that the perfect Theory of their Church shall be carried out; and being convinced that this perfect Theory is daily Morn-

ing and Evening Prayer, for which there are daily Psalms and Lessons, and Holy Communion on Sundays and Festivals, for which there is always a new Epistle and Gospel, we arrange it so that no devout person shall be able to complain with justice that opportunities are wanting, while in reference to those who cannot at present feel it profitable to communicate so often, we abstain from all judgment of the conclusion at which they have arrived, and comply with the Apostle's direction, which may be very fitly appropriated to this matter: "Let not him that eateth judge him that eateth not; for" (may be) "God hath received him." In this, at least, the advocates both of frequent and rare Communion will be found to agree, that the holy things are not to be given to the dogs,—that the Holy Supper is unsuitable for the profane.

Yet, be it observed, lest those guests who are most worthy should be discouraged from approaching the Holy Table, that a sense of the defilement of sin is one of the chief qualifications for a right reception. Dogs may not draw nigh; nor may swine have the pearls of Christ's Body and Blood thrown before them; but those are not dogs, in the estimate of the Lord of the Church, who confess themselves to be so; nor those swine, who stir themselves out of the mire of their corruptions, and cry mightily for deliverance from them. She who accepted the title of dog, and with the ingenuity of faith rested upon that title her claim to a crumb of mercy, at length obtained the bread of the children, while confessing herself unworthy of it. And he who lies lowest in his own eyes, he who is accounted vile in his own sight, yet hangs on to Christ from the conviction that "whosoever cometh to Him, He will in no wise cast out" or spurn away,



shall not plead in vain for a crumb of the Bread of Life, but, having come with hunger of heart to the Heavenly Banquet, shall go away with the Virgin's experience upon his lips:—

“He filleth the hungry with good things.”

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## LECTURE II.

### OF THE INVITATION.

“We sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.”—LUKE xiv. 17.

It is certainly an argument against the Revision of the Liturgy that, the longer and closer we study it, the more we become convinced that an immense amount of care, and thought, and prayer has been spent upon its construction, and that a Scriptural and theological erudition underlies the whole of it. We are apt to think that we can well afford to lose some of its minuter features; but a more careful consideration of the subject shows us that to strike out one of those features would be to forfeit a Scriptural idea, and might put a whole Service out of joint. Who would not say at first sight that we might spare from the Communion Office the invitation which precedes the Confession: “Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways; Draw near



with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort"? It is but a single sentence, we might say; and the qualifications of communicants, which it briefly sums up, have been given us more at large in the longer Exhortation which precedes;—why repeat them? Yet, on second thoughts, would the Service be as consistent with Scripture and Primitive Antiquity, if this short sentence were away?

Would it be in the first place as consistent with Scripture? Let it be considered that the Lord's Supper is a miniature Gospel, a perfect little model of the New Dispensation in all its essential features. This New Dispensation—its happiness and privileges—the festive satisfaction which the soul finds in its blessings—are twice set forth by Our Lord under the image of a supper—"a great supper"—"a wedding festival." The certain man, who makes the great supper, sends his servants at supper time to say to them that are bidden, "Come; for all things are now ready." The king, who made a marriage for his son, sends three detachments of his servants for the same purpose. By the agency of these servants guests are at length collected (in both parables) from the highways and hedges. In the last of them, when the king comes in to inspect the guests, he sees there a man who has not on a wedding garment, and expels him as an intruder. Every one knows the outline of the interpretation of these parables; that the blessings of the Gospel were first proposed by Our Lord and His Apostles to the Jews; that, when the higher and more educated Jews with Pharisaic scorn rejected it, the Publicans and harlots pressed into the opened kingdom; that ere long, since there still was room, the poor despised Gentiles thronged in from the highways and hedges of

the world ; but yet that it is by no means every nominal adherent to the Church of Christ, who will be found at the last great day of inspection to have the internal qualifications for acceptance, which are set forth by the wedding garment. Now who does not see that this whole procedure is represented in brief in the Lord's Supper? First there is an actual Supper—a feast upon the symbols, which both represent and convey the Body and Blood of Christ, the true “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Then those are bidden to partake of this Supper, who in contrition of heart feel deeply their need of a Saviour, and rejoice in the assurance of His dying Love, which the Sacrament conveys. Yet, though it be no merit of their own, but rather an acknowledgment of their utter demerit, which procures their acceptance as guests, they must not lack the internal qualifications of Repentance, Faith, and Love, which alone can make the banquet available to the strengthening and refreshing of their souls. Thousands of those who communicate outwardly lack these qualifications, and will be shown at the last day to have been “in no wise partakers of Christ”—to have neither part nor lot in the matter of Grace and Redemption. But in order to make the analogy complete, must not a formal invitation be issued, and must there not be an official conveyance of the invitation? Now, who is the person whose part it is officially to convey it? Surely he who is the minister of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God. The Sacraments constitute part of that Divine provision for the wants of the Church, of which the minister is a steward, and which he is set to dispense to the household. He, therefore, is the servant who is to say officially, “Come ; for all things are now ready.” And this he is

directed to say by the words of the Rubric which precedes the Invitation: "*Then shall the Priest say to them that come to receive the Holy Communion, Ye that do truly and earnestly,*" &c., &c.

But the Supper of the Lord is not only the miniature of a dispensation present, but the foreshadowing of a dispensation to come. It is designed and adapted to lead forward our thoughts to that Marriage Supper of the Lamb which shall be celebrated, when the Heavenly Bridegroom shall return to lead His bride home, escorted by those who have been patiently waiting for His appearance. That Supper shall be, as no Sacrament here can be, exclusive of all those, the light of whose profession has not been fed by the oil of personal piety, continually preserved in the oil-vessel of the heart. It shall be exclusive of all those who have not on the wedding garment. And it is meet surely that a warning to this effect should be made in the very conveyance of the Invitation to the earthly Supper. An admonition is surely much in place, that those only are invited, the filthy rags of whose natural condition as sinners are covered (by a real faith) with the fine line, white and clean, of Christ's righteousness. In issuing the invitation, therefore, the Priest is virtually directed to bid those only who have on the wedding garment,—those who "truly and earnestly repent them of their sins, and are in love and charity with their neighbours, and intend to lead a new life," and moreover, and above all, who "draw nigh with faith."

Thus it is clear that, were we to strike out this Invitation, we should lose a Scriptural and valuable feature of the Service,—a feature, moreover, which is essential to the completeness of the idea of the Ordinance; for

never yet was there an entertainment, without a summoning of guests by formal invitation.

And we should lose a primitive feature also. In the Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem, the deacon addressed the people thus before Communion: "Draw near with the fear of God, with faith and charity"—a briefer form, of which ours is an expansion. And in the Apostolic Constitutions, and the writings of the early Fathers, similar invitations are either directly mentioned, or it is implied that they were made.

It will be observed, in studying this short Invitation, that the qualifications specified are not all put on the same footing. To one of them, which is faith, a prominence is assigned: "Ye who have repentance, charity, holy intentions, draw near *with faith*." This is very significant; for faith is the principle by which alone we can draw near, rather than a mere qualification. The approach must be made in faith, with faith, by faith, if it is to be a real approach at all.

I. The first qualification stated is repentance; and its necessary characteristics are that it shall be true (or sincere) and earnest. Better words could not have been chosen. Our concern for the sins, which Self-examination has brought to light, must be a real concern. It is not said that it shall be passionate, or vehemently excite the feelings (for this passionateness of grief is not competent to all characters, and indeed is sometimes found in characters of the least depth), but that it shall be true. And its truth, of course, will be most satisfactorily evinced by the abandonment of the sin, for which the concern is felt. Yet let me remark that there should be a tenderness in the Christian's sorrow for sin, which no



review of the sin itself, no mere moral considerations of its evil and danger will ever produce. The only specific for throwing this element of tenderness into our repentance is a devout contemplation of the Cross of Christ, and of the Love displayed therein, with the prayer that we may be enabled to mourn for Him whom our sins have pierced. And since this Ordinance commemorates and represents the Cross of Christ, a repentance of this sort is peculiarly appropriate in the communicant.

II. The next qualification is Love, or Charity with our neighbours, according to the wide acceptation, which our Lord has given to the word ‘neighbour,’ in His Parable of the good Samaritan,—every one, however estranged from us by prejudices and difference of associations, across whose path we are thrown by Divine Providence. It is observable, that Love is a special requirement of them who come to the Lord’s Supper, over and above those requirements, which are made of persons to be baptized. By the first Sacrament we are admitted into the fellowship of Christ’s Church, before which admission we could know nothing of Brotherly Love or the Communion of Saints. But after that admission, and as a preparative for the higher Sacrament, we must exercise the graces which are involved in Christian fellowship. It should be remembered that the Lord’s Supper is a Festival, not only commemorative of the Love of Christ, but significant also of the Love which Christians should entertain towards one another. “For we being many,” says St. Paul in reference to this Sacrament, “are one Bread” (one loaf) “and one Body; for we are all partakers of that one Bread;” that is, By partaking all of us of one and the same Eucharist Loaf (the representative and the vehicle of the Body of Christ) we become one



Body. Surely it were profanation, it were to come in a spirit discordant with the whole tenour of the Ordinance, —if we were to nourish ill-will or enmity in our hearts, while we approach the Lord's Table. Has not Our Lord, though he may not be speaking in the first instance of the Christian Altar, implicitly and in principle forbidden all such approach, when He lays down as a law for His followers in the Sermon on the Mount : “ If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift ” ? We shall find it a great security for the fulfilment of this precept, if, before communicating, we make it a practice to intercede earnestly for any who may have offended, or wounded, or thwarted us, and, placing ourselves by an effort of mind in their position, to regard their conduct from their point of view instead of from our own.

III. The next qualification specified is a pure and guileless intention,—a readiness in the will to part with all that is wrong, to adopt whatever a conscience enlightened by God's Word may point out to be right. There must be no reserves from God,—no secret refusal in any corner of the heart to go the full length of His claims. The former requirements were that the affections should be in a right state, first towards our Crucified Redeemer, then towards man ; the present is that *the will* should be in a right state before the heart-searching God. While, on the one hand, we must say that the intention to lead a new life is by no means equivalent to a promise never to sin again (which would be rash in the extreme, for we may be surprised into any sin), on the other, there is no doubt that a serious intention to keep the Commandments

of God will, in proportion to its seriousness, *secure* the better keeping of them. We have very instructive proverbs, which we may apply to this subject, both on the general failure of good intentions (a failure arising from their indeterminateness, want of point, want of earnestness, in a word, from their never being good intentions at all, but merely good *wishes*), and also to the effect that, where there is a real honest and earnest intention, such as we call a *will*, there some way is always found of carrying it into effect.

The above, then, are the dispositions of mind and heart, which are suitable to, and of a piece with, the great Solemnity which we are about to observe. They constitute therefore the wedding garment; for what is a wedding garment, but a garment in keeping with the occasion of a wedding,—a garment whose colour and beauty matches with the festivity? In this garment we must come arrayed, the Invitation tells us, if we would be received as welcome guests.

But then it passes on to the principle, under the operation of which alone we can draw nigh. “Draw near with faith.” Without faith there is no possibility of drawing near in such a manner as to partake of Christ, or derive His virtue into our souls. If it be asked, what is the object of this faith? we may reply, in the words of our Church, “a lively faith in God’s mercy, through Christ,” “a full trust in God’s mercy,” such as may engender a quiet conscience. We must believe in that mercy as applicable and extended to ourselves, and to the particular sins of which our own conscience accuses us. And the belief must be in a present forgiveness now bestowed, and must not sink down into a mere nerveless

hope of future acceptance. And, again, we must exercise faith in respect of the especial blessings of the Ordinance,—union with Christ, and participation of His Body and Blood. Our faith must see him underlying the Elements, and offering Himself to us in all the precious virtues of His Mediatorial Work. We must believe that through the Ordinance we ourselves become as closely united with Him in spirit, as the Bread and Wine become united with, and indistinguishable from, the substance of our bodies ; and that thus we ourselves become living and breathing Sacraments of Christ, bearing Him about within us, and under the obligation of expressing and representing Him in our lives. Without at all events some amount of this faith, there is no possibility of an inward and spiritual Communion with Him. There may be a corporeal, but there is no spiritual, access. We may resemble the multitudes, who thronged Him and pressed Him by an outward contact, not the poor woman who, through the simple touch of His raiment, drew into her afflicted frame the healing virtue of which she stood in need. And when at the last day we plead before Him, “ We have eaten and drunk in thy Presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets,” He will not recognize us as ever having had with Him any real intercourse ; He will turn upon us, as strangers and aliens, with the words, “ I tell you, I never knew you ; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.”

The Invitation which we have now considered, and the Exhortation which precedes it, are most integral parts of the Office, inasmuch as they bring out into such sharp relief the internal qualifications required in Communicants. Here, as in most other departments of The-

ology, there are two opposite errors, equally avoided by our Church; of which, in concluding this Lecture, we may say a word. There are those then,—and they are a numerous class of religionists,—who see God in nothing external to their own minds. If such persons would speak out their meaning bravely, and carry out their principles to their logical results, they would say that sacredness and sanctity there is none, except in the heart;—that an Ordinance has no sacredness, except so far as man is conscious of receiving from it a sensible spiritual benefit. Thus, in Public Worship, such persons would say, there is no Presence of Christ, unless we realize it. He has said, indeed, that “where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there is He in the midst of them;” but by this can be meant nothing more than that He is present to our apprehensions; it is the action of our minds, not the celebration of the Ordinance, which draws Him down into the midst of us. On the same principles, such persons would say, “There is no sacredness in the consecrated elements in themselves; apart from the receivers they are nothing; our faith it is which makes them the Body and Blood of Christ to us, and not any-act external to our minds which passes upon them.”

But what saith the Scripture? “The Cup of Blessing *which we bless*, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread *which we break*, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?”

And what saith the Liturgy? “Sanctify *this water* to the mystical washing away of sin.” “If the consecrated Bread and Wine be all spent, before all have communicated, the Priest is to *consecrate more*, according to the form before prescribed.” Why to consecrate more?



—why to consecrate any, if Consecration does nothing; if the faith of the recipient would make unconsecrated Bread and Wine equally available and effective? The tendency of this error is to place the whole of religion in the shifting frames and feelings of the soul; to turn the eye exclusively inward, and to foster a wretched introspection; to hinder man from walking abroad freely in the sunlight of Christian Privilege, and among the great objective realities of the Kingdom of God.

But there is another, and at least equally fatal, error on the other side. In contemplating God's Ordinances, we may look wholly at the Institution, at the external observance, and dwell upon it until we allow it to engross the whole field of view, and put out of sight altogether the state of mind in which it is to be approached. The Ordinance, according to this view (and it is the view of all Romanizing Theology), becomes a spell or charm, which acts upon us independently of our giving our mind to it; and a sort of system of magic is set up in the Church of Christ, which quite deprives the Institution of the character of a reasonable Service. The monstrous absurdity of such a view is shown in the strongest light by some of those frivolous questions which Romanist Theologians, pursuing their theory to its just conclusions, ask in their books of Casuistry: for example, "Would an animal, partaking by an accident of the Host or Consecrated Wafer, become partaker of the Body of Christ?" The very fact of such a question being raised shows surely to common sense and common reverence, that they who raise it must be altogether on the wrong scent. To come across such a difficulty at all, they must have erred from sound Reason and Scriptural Truth. An animal has not that immortal spirit, by which alone



man is enabled to hold communion with his Creator. To apprehend God, there must be Reason; and accordingly none of the lower creatures, being devoid of Reason, can apprehend God. This is of course an extreme form of error; but it is clear that any approach to such a conclusion must be wrong. Suppose a man imbruted by sensuality,—one who had reduced himself by indulgence of the animal appetites to the level of the beasts that perish,—such an one, it is clear, could not apprehend Christ, nor become partaker of His Body. There may be in him the spiritual faculty; but it is latent, undeveloped, almost extinct. Then the question arises, “What kind and amount of development must there be in the spiritual faculty, to ensure the blessing of the Ordinance to the recipient?” And the only answer to be given to this is that which our Church has given. There must be penitence, real and genuine, if not passionate. To celebrate Christ crucified with a heart of stone, what a profanation must it be!—There must be love. To celebrate the feast of love with any portion of rancorous feeling, what an awful discordance between the outward and the inward!—There must be holy intentions. To profess self-surrender to a crucified Saviour without integrity, what a frightful hypocrisy!—And, finally, there must be the faculty which realizes things unseen. To regard the elements as so much natural food, and not to discern by faith the Lord’s Body lying beneath them, would evidently be to frustrate the Ordinance altogether! We have indeed no warrant for prescribing the *amount* of these inward qualifications. We doubt not that where they really exist, there the Blessing of the Ordinance is in a degree realized, even though a far greater measure of them might be desirable. And we cannot doubt also

that, the more we grow in these dispositions, the more fruit shall we gather from this Holy Ordinance, and the more shall we experience the blessedness of it. A lifeless body has no power of assimilating food. A feeble living body can only assimilate a little, administered by degrees; but a body, with the pulses of life beating strong and quick within it, a hungry and a craving body, can assimilate it thoroughly and easily, and grow thereby. And the soul resembles the body. With a feeble spiritual pulse we can apprehend Christ but feebly in the Holy Communion: but if there be a strong hunger and thirst after righteousness, a strong craving for the Bread of Life, a strong sense of spiritual poverty and indigence, a strong resolve formed in reliance on God's Grace, a strong faith which pierces the veil of things sensible and material, great will then be the comfort received from this Holy Communion, and in the strength of that meat we shall go forward, like Elijah of old, to the Mount of God, the end and goal of our pilgrimage.

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### LECTURE III.

#### OF THE CONFESSION.

"If we confess our sins, *He* is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 JOHN i. 9.

MAN was made, we are told, originally in the image of God; and, although man be fallen, there are still certain echoes in his nature, and in his dealings with his fellow-man, of the Divine perfections. These echoes

are recognized in some of our Lord's Parables, and are indeed the basis of the similitude. What other foundation have the Parables of the Friend at Midnight, the Unjust Judge, the Unmerciful Servant, the Prodigal Son, but the truth that God will deal with us much as we deal with one another; being won by our importunity, roused to anger by our harsh dealing with others, and moved to welcome us back to His arms on the first movement of a true repentance?

Now among the features of a better mind in man, which have survived the great moral wreck of the Fall, is this, that we are always disposed to relent towards an offender who ingenuously confesses his fault, and takes upon himself the whole shame and blame of it. That man's heart is unnaturally and exceptionally hard, who, when another says to him, "I have injured you deeply, and I have nothing to say in my own defence; I throw myself upon your goodness and forbearance; forgive this great wrong,"—can spurn away the suppliant, and refuse to look indulgently upon him. Now this feature of the human character is a dim reflection of the infinite compassionateness towards penitent sinners which there is in the heart of God, in virtue of which, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

But then it must be remembered that God, inasmuch as He is a searcher of the thoughts and intents of the heart, does not accept as confession, as we are obliged to do, the mere acknowledgment of the mouth. And confession of sin with the heart is by no means so easy a thing as we are apt to imagine. The mere telling forth our faults presents little or no difficulty. What is so difficult—so impossible, except by Divine Grace—is the honestly taking to ourselves the full blame and shame of

them. In the moment of the Fall, the principle of self-love acquired in the human mind the most exaggerated dimensions; it ceased to be a just and proper self-love, and became self-partiality of the grossest kind. And to stand clear of this self-partiality in estimating our faults is, in fact, the hardest moral task which any one can set us. Our present mental constitution resembles in this respect our physical. Persons afflicted with cancer, or similar complaints, are not themselves sensible of the loathsomeness and offensiveness of the disease; it is to them endurable, though it is eating into their vitals; whereas others can hardly be in their neighbourhood without a sensation of nausea. And bosom sins have a similar property of inoffensiveness to their possessor,—to the very person in whose nature they are a great gangrene. The man cannot, except by special Grace, stand apart from himself, and judge his bosom sin as he would judge it in another. We see accordingly that the first indication of the Fall of mān was his making excuses for what he had done,—the exceeding reluctance to acknowledge the freedom of his own will, and therefore the fulness of his own fault, in the eating of the forbidden fruit. Adam, when expostulated with, shifts the blame to his partner; while at the same time he does not hesitate to bring in God Himself as partly guilty: “The woman, whom *Thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” The woman, when she is referred to, traces the guilt up to the serpent: “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” Marvellously lifelike representation of the way in which their descendants have always cloaked their faults, when God has expostulated with them in the inner man. Do we not all make for ourselves excuses precisely similar? Sometimes we



secretly whisper to our own conscience: "The passions are so much stronger in me than in my neighbour." Sometimes (forgetting that different positions have different temptations of their own): "My circumstances are so peculiarly trying." Sometimes: "It was society which drew me into this sin." While we sometimes quarrel with (or at least murmur against) our Creator in the true spirit of Adam: "Why has He surrounded me with such an atmosphere of Temptation? Why has He so strictly prescribed virtue, and yet made the attainment of it so difficult? If I throw temptation in the way of others, I am blameworthy, and consider myself so. Why does God put me providentially in harm's way, and then find fault?" And all this time, while we are thus reasoning, we fancy ourselves conscious of great rectitude of intention, even in the face of all facts. That is a profound saying of the wise man's: "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes." Not that sinners can sin without many checks and hindrances from an accusing conscience. But these checks and hindrances do not interfere with their favourable estimate of their own character. Even when their conduct is admitted to be faulty, they are still on good terms with themselves. The man, who has committed the most atrocious crimes, never thinks himself a demon, though all the world may so esteem him. The truth is, that the human will never can accept evil as evil, without first tricking it out in the colours of good. And having accepted it, it still clings to these colours, and makes the most of them.

There is one certain indication of the exceeding difficulty of lying low in our own eyes, which I cannot refrain from adverting to. It is our wonderful reluctance to lie low in the eyes of others. If we really thought



ill of ourselves, we should be quite willing that others should think ill of us; for consider that it is not in our nature to be angry with persons for agreeing with our own sentiments. On the contrary, we are apt to be favourably disposed towards those who view matters in the same light as ourselves. If, therefore, we should find ourselves inwardly displeased with persons who take a very low moral estimate of our character and conduct, this shows very conclusively that we ourselves, however humble our language may be, do not really take the same estimate. If self-esteem were really killed within us by the perception of our sins, we should not be unjust enough to feel irritation towards those who withhold from us *their* esteem. But when *will* self-esteem be dead in any of us? Test its amount of deadness in yourself by considering how you would feel if called upon to confess to a fellow-creature the worst action of your life; or merely the worst omission of duty, with all its aggravations, its meanness, pettiness, and all the details of the sin. What contrivances would there be, as the revelation startled him to whom it was made, to regain the esteem which you perceive is drawing off from you like a receding tide! How would you try to escape, by every means in your power, from lying before him in the nakedness of your shame! How would you weave into the confession certain good deeds as a set-off, and feel bound in candour (so you would put it to yourself) to mention all extenuating circumstances! Even while making known your guilt, how would you be plotting and planning for reinstatement in his good opinion, and nourishing the secret hope that your confession might give you in his eyes a character for humility! Why is this, but because in your heart of hearts you really do

not think ill of yourself—because your sin, however grievous it may be in the abstract view of it, has not at all destroyed your self-complacency?

Now a confession, in which there is no mortification of self-complacency—in which the sinner does not lie low in his own eyes, though he may express himself to that effect, is no confession in the eyes of God. But on the other hand, however there is a real self-abasement in the inner man, a real willingness to take upon ourself the blame and shame of sin, a readiness to consent to its exposure before all the world, if God's Love and Grace could be magnified thereby,—there God deals with us, in consideration of Christ's finished work, much on the same principle (though of course on a much larger scale of compassionateness) as we should deal with an offending brother, who, throwing himself on his knees before us, should confess an injury, and implore our forgiveness.

Into these reflections we are led by the history and the contents of the Confession in the Communion Service. It is by no means a new feature of the Service,—confession (sometimes reciprocal, of the priest to the people, and of the people to the priest) having formed a part of several early Liturgies; but our own form of Confession is derived from a contemporary work consulted by our Reformers, called “The Simple and Religious Consultation of Hermann, Archbishop of Cologne.” In modifying this form, which they substituted for the meagre confession common in the mediæval Church (borrowing however from this last the threefold division of sins into “thought, word, and deed”), they have shown great skill and judgment. A passage in which the corruption of

our nature was confessed in strong terms: "We acknowledge and we lament that we were conceived and born in sins (and that therefore we be prone to all evils, and abhor from all good things)," they have altogether omitted. And this is the more remarkable, because at the final Revision of the Liturgy in 1661, it was a point objected to the Confessions by the Presbyterian divines, that they were "too general, and *did not contain sufficient reference to original sin.*" The history of this Confession shows that this omission (or we should rather say, this subdued allusion to original sin) was more or less by design. And for this design two reasons may be alleged, both which probably had a measure of weight with the compilers. First; it has been the constant doctrine of the Church that the guilt of Original Sin is washed away (not its power removed) by the Sacrament of Baptism. "The fault and corruption of our nature which doth remain, even in them that are regenerated," as well as the actual sins of a penitent and believing adult, are forgiven in the One Baptism, which is for the remission of sins. Now our Confessions are of course designed only for the use of the baptized; and on that ground the reference in them to a guilt already obliterated is less marked than might have been expected. The Bishops, in their defence of these Confessions, and in reply to the Presbyterians, expressly say: "It is an evil custom, springing from false doctrine, to use expressions which may lead people to think that original sin is not forgiven in holy Baptism: yet original Sin is clearly acknowledged in confessing that the desires of our own hearts render us miserable by following them," &c.—But, secondly, our excellent Reformers designed these prayers to be a personal confession of the sins, of which each

member of the congregation felt himself guilty. To allege the depravity of our nature before God (however true) might seem to offer some excuse for our actual sins. Such an excuse is one out of the many, by which man in the court of conscience cloaks his sin to himself. "I was born with this strong bias to evil," is just one of the pleas by which the guilt of sin is continually evaded. Our Reformers did not wish to suggest any such plea to the penitent. He was to be taught to take upon himself the full responsibility of his own actions. Notwithstanding all the bias of evil inclinations, his will has been perfectly free throughout his whole career of evil. His own consciousness furnishes the best proof of this. Am I not conscious that, if I please, I can arouse my will, when temptation is offered, to resist it? that I can bring before my mind the arguments, and apply to my own will the motives, which persuade to and prompt resistance? And this being the case, is there any real excuse to be found for me in the strength of evil inclinations, more especially when to me, a Christian, God has all along proffered the assistances of His Grace? So that the more I look at my own personal identification of myself with the sin of Adam, and the less at my inbred depravity, the more likely is my humiliation to be real.

As regards the contents of this Confession, it is instructive to compare them with those of the Form in the daily Morning and Evening Prayer. They who do so will not fail to perceive how much deeper is the tone of humiliation in the Prayer before us. To specify some particulars. God is here addressed as "the Judge of all men," a feature of the Divine character, which is not brought out in the ordinary Confession. The sins confessed are designated by the strong term "wickedness."

Not content with the simple setting them forth, we hint at their aggravation in the words, "which we from time to time *most grievously* have committed." They are alleged to have been "in thought," as well as in word and deed. They are said "most justly to provoke God's wrath and indignation against us." We profess the very memory of them to be "grievous unto us, the burden of them to be intolerable." And, finally, we emphasize the cry for mercy by twice repeating it: "Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father." There can be no question that the daily Confession implies much less of a lively concern for sin, much less profound abasement. And there is a great lesson here, which we shall do well not to overlook. Our Blessed Lord, in His solemn words to St. Peter, recognizes two sorts of spiritual cleansing; one total, and of the entire person, the other partial, and needing to be daily renewed: "He that is washed" (it should be, "that is bathed,"—whose whole person is washed), "needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." We may apply this passage to illustrate the distinction in tone between these two Confessions. There are sins of infirmity,—dust which we collect upon our feet during our walk through the world, and which needs to be daily wiped off by confession, and by seeking fresh pardon through Christ's Blood. The daily Confession, then, is for the washing of this dust from the feet. But more solemn periods of humiliation are desirable, when we may review with stricter scrutiny a larger period of our career, and marking how stained with sin the whole of it is, and how even "our righteousnesses have been as filthy rags,"—how "our repentance needs to be repented of, and the tears which we shed for sin to be washed over



again in the Blood of Christ,"—may abase ourselves more deeply in God's sight. And when shall these periods rather be, than before we draw near to the Holy Table, to communicate with our Lord's Passion, and to partake of remission of sins, and all the other fruits of it? Approaches to God, which merely bring us into His Presence, without uniting us to Him, need not so deep a humiliation. But in proportion to the nearness of the approach (and in the Lord's Supper we have the nearest approach, which it is possible to have on earth) must be the depth of our abasement. Were we to see Christ without a veil, as the holiest saints have sometimes been privileged to see Him, and as we shall all see Him in the future state, we should fall at His feet as dead, as did the beloved Apostle in Patmos; we should exclaim, with the Prophet Isaiah, when we saw His glory, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;" we should answer, with Thomas, when convicted by the sight of the sacred wounds, "My Lord and my God." And when we are about to see Christ under a veil, as the Lamb which has been slain, but who is now alive again, and ready to communicate Himself to, and to identify Himself with, every penitent and believing soul, should not this wonderful condescension work in us a feeling akin to that expressed by Job: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

The Confession at the Communion gives utterance to such a feeling. Perhaps no Communicants realize its terms to their full extent. But this is certain, that the more we realize them, the more deeply we sympathize

with the thoughts which that language conveys, the larger will be the blessing which we derive from the Ordinance. For what is it which prevents our minds from being filled with God? Is it not the amount of space, which self occupies in them? If, then, by Grace bestowed in answer to earnest Prayer, the mind be emptied of self;—if self-complacency be turned into self-abhorrence, and self-confidence give place to self-distrust,—then the way of Christ is prepared in the soul, and He will enter in, and dwell there, and fulfil to us that most gracious promise, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”



## LECTURE IV.

### OF MINISTERIAL ABSOLUTION.

“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”—JOHN XX. 21—23.

IN these words Our Blessed Lord, at His first interview with them after His Resurrection, conveyed to His Apostles the power of remitting and retaining sins. The risen Saviour brings this power with Him as the first-fruits of His Death and Passion. That Death had pur-

chased forgiveness ; His Blood was “shed for many *for the remission of sins.*” And, accordingly, the Blood having been shed, the power of remission is lodged at once, on the very Resurrection Day, in the hands of the Apostles. It is observable that the bestowal of this power is not delayed till Pentecost, when the Eleven were fully qualified for their mission. And the circumstance may perhaps be designed to teach us that there is a distinction (which has been always recognized by the Reformed Churches) between justification (or the acquittal of a sinner) and sanctification (or his being made holy) ; that the one precedes the other in point of time ; that not until a sinner has been forgiven, can his sanctification commence.

We have now arrived in our course of Lectures at the Precatory Absolution, which succeeds the Confession in our Communion Office. But we cannot treat this Prayer satisfactorily, unless we go to the root of the matter, and consider the power of Absolution generally, both in its Scriptural grounds, and in the forms which it takes in our own Communion. And this will necessarily occupy more than one Lecture.

We will first, then, seek to understand this power, as lodged in the hands of, and exercised by, the Apostles.

Many things said by Our Lord to His Apostles were addressed to them as private Christians, having no official character or peculiar prerogative. Examples of such words, which we may all take to ourselves, are,—“If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.” “Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father

which is in heaven." "Watch ; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh."

Other things were said to them, as men who occupied a peculiar position, which no other men did, and none other can, occupy,—words which are obviously for them, and for them alone. Instances are: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me ; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "The Holy Ghost shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Finally, some things which are said to them, are addressed to them in their official capacity, as representatives of the Christian Ministry to the end of Time. I will quote one such word: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" The Apostles, however, did not live (and Our Lord must have known that they would not live) to the end of the world, which shows us that He was speaking to them not as individuals, but as representatives of those, who to the end of the world should hold His commission to baptize, and to give Christian instruction. And it will not be denied that this commission is held by Christian Ministers only, and not by the Laity.

The first point necessary for the understanding of Our



Lord's words in the passage before us is to inquire under what capacity it is that He is addressing His Apostles. For if it is in the second capacity, as those who had been associated with Him in His temptations,—as those who had companied with him during the period of His earthly pilgrimage, and thus were competent witnesses to the world of His Resurrection, in that case we have no practical concern at all with the power of Absolution, however reasonably we may feel an interest of curiosity in it. If the power expired with the Apostles, it would not conduce any more to our spiritual welfare to know what it was, or what it did for mankind, than it would to understand the nature of the gift of tongues.

Now that Our Lord did not speak these solemn words to the Eleven, as representing private Christians, may be gathered first from the context, which points very clearly to their true application: “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: *as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.* And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” It is clear that the power of remitting and retaining sins is conferred on the persons who had received the mission; that the power and this mission are not to be disjoined. And what then is the mission? It cannot be doubted that it is the same as that recorded by (and which we have already had occasion to quote from) St. Matthew, a mission to go into all the world, and make disciples by baptism and Christian teaching. Our Lord Himself had come on this mission, having been sent by the Father. He had preached in every synagogue, in the Temple, and under the canopy



of the sky, the Kingdom of God. By this preaching He had made and baptized (though not with His own hands) "more disciples than John." And now He sends His delegates on the same mission,—a mission not confined (as formerly) to Judæa, but extending to the whole world. But if this be the mission, it is not one which has descended to private Christians. Therefore neither has the power of remitting and retaining sins which is associated with it.

Again; that these words were not addressed to the Apostles exclusively, and as persons occupying a peculiar position, which can be held by none other, may be gathered from the nature of the power conferred. It is not a miraculous gift, which is here bestowed, in which case we should of course think it an endowment limited to the Apostolic age. It is not a power, the necessity of which has ceased, or ever will cease, until sin is exterminated. It is the power of remitting sins; as much called for surely in one age as in another. Surely this power is as essential to the health and well-being of souls, in whatever age they are brought out into existence, as the power to preach, and teach, and administer the Sacraments; and being so, it must continue with the Church, as the Saviour's Presence does, "even to the end of the world." For it is absurd to suppose that the death of the Apostles should cut off the entail of an inheritance, purchased by the Lord's Death not for them alone, but for all those who should believe on Him through their word. No! assuredly these keys of the Kingdom of Heaven have passed down from the Apostles into the custody of those who have truly inherited the Apostles' Ministry in its ordinary powers. And that such is the view taken by our Church is clear from the

fact that Our Lord's words in the text are repeated at the Ordination of every Priest, the formula of which runs thus : "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. *Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.*" But unless the power of Absolution still abide substantially with the Christian Ministry, such use of these words must surely be presumptuous in a high degree, even to the verge of blasphemy.

Now there is but one qualification of what has been said, which requires to be taken into account. It is this : Though the power of Absolution did not attach exclusively to the Ministers of the Primitive, as distinct from those of the Modern, Church,—there was in the Apostolic Church a miraculous power, *which greatly helped the Minister in the right exercise of Absolution.* This power was called "the discerning of spirits ;" and in virtue of it, the Holy Apostles, and some of those on whom they laid hands, were enabled on occasions to read the heart and discern the true character of the persons with whom they had to deal. They were not dependent on a man's profession of penitence and faith for a knowledge of his state of mind ; but they read penitence and faith, impenitence and unbelief, by a miraculous intuition. Now it is evident that, in the whole administration of their absolving power, this discernment of spirits must have greatly helped them, specially where it was to be exercised towards individuals. For if a man has not repentance and faith, he has no receptivity for, no capacity of profiting by, Absolution or Baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or the Benediction of the Church, and should

accordingly be excluded from them. And, accordingly, the power of seeing infallibly whether men had these graces or had them not, must have been an assistance to the Apostles in enabling them to absolve or retain sins aright, and according to the mind of God. They could not make a mistake as to the characters which were receptive of, and prepared for, Absolution. And this may make, and justly does make, a difference between them and modern ministers:—the amount of which is this, that modern ministers must exercise the great function (at all events towards individuals) with a caution, and a reserve, and a deliberateness, very much greater than was required in the Apostles. The power may be exactly the same; but there is not now the same discretion to regulate its use. Let me give an illustration, which may simplify the idea to some minds. A rich man leaves a large sum of money in the hands of trustees, directing that they shall use it for the relief of distress, and giving them powers to fill up vacancies in their body, when such arise. The original trustees are men thoroughly conversant with charities, who know that every petitioner for relief is not really a deserving object of it, and to whom long experience among the poor has given a sagacity which seldom errs or fails. By and by, however, the trustees are replaced by others, who have no knowledge of the world and its ways, and are apt to be imposed upon by the first tale of distress. Now to these latter trustees it would be right and necessary to say: “You must be exceedingly cautious in the administration of this bequest, lest you should do more harm than good, contravene the testator’s intention, and, instead of relieving distress, encourage indolence and dependence, and so multiply pauperism. Indeed, might it not be

well for you scarcely ever to give to individuals, but rather to administer the relief indirectly, yet not less efficiently, through the medium of Hospitals, Dispensaries, or Mendicity Societies? At all events, let the direct application of your funds to the individual be the exception, not the rule.”—Now this is the very way (as far as it can be exhibited in a figure) in which the Church of England directs her Clergy to administer the treasure of Absolution, which she believes to have come down to them, as the purchase of the Master’s Blood. The power is fully and emphatically recognized in the Ordination Service, in the Morning and Evening Prayer, and in the Communion Service. But the usual forms, in which it is exercised, are public; because here the exercise is safe and guarded. The absolution is declared to be for those only who repent and believe, and with this proviso is flung abroad on the Congregation at large, to find those whom it ought to find. As for private and individual Absolutions, without saying they are never to be pronounced, the English Church is judiciously chary of them. The circumstances under which they may be sought are indicated as exceptional, not normal. If any man cannot quiet his own conscience before coming to the Holy Communion, he is directed to come to some “discreet and learned Minister of God’s Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God’s holy Word he may receive the benefit of Absolution.” And, again, if a dying man (a man placed in front of eternity cannot well be insincere in his professions) feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, the English Prayer Book prescribes that he shall be moved to make a special Confession of his sins, “after which Confession the Priest shall absolve him, if he humbly



and heartily desire it." And even these cautious admissions of Private Absolution the compilers of our own Book of Common Prayer have thought it wiser to expunge; not that they made any doubt of the existence of the Power of Absolution; but that they desired to guard it jealously from abuse, as knowing that there is not always the discretion necessary for its right exercise.

But in order fully to understand this power of remitting and retaining sins, as it was conferred upon the Apostles, we must look at it in its exercise as well as in its bestowal. St. Peter, then, retained the sins of Ananias and Sapphira, when he denounced their hypocrisy, and predicted their punishment. In this earliest exercise of the power, we see the miraculous gift of discerning spirits assisting the Apostle in the administration of it. The gift is no more; and temporal judgments no longer ratify the sentences of the Church; but this does not affect her possession of the power. Suppose a Christian Minister coming in a natural way to the knowledge of some grievous sin in some member of his flock, and representing to him faithfully its heinousness, and the impossibility of pardon without repentance; suppose, to take a definite case, that "perceiving malice and hatred to reign" between two members of the Church, he should remonstrate with them on that state of mind, and, as our Communion Office bids him, should debar such persons from the Lord's Table until he know them to be reconciled,—this would be the retention of sins in its modern and unmiraculous form, and there can be no doubt that the judgment so passed (I am assuming it to be in all respects equitable) would be ratified from on high.

The dealing of St. Peter with Simon Magus is



another instance of the retention of sins. The iniquity of the sinner's heart was in this case manifest from the iniquity of his proposal; and St. Peter meets it by a sharp rebuke, holding out to him, however, the hope of God's forgiveness on condition of repentance. Simon, overwhelmed by the force of the reproof, requests the prayers of the Apostles that "none of these things which ye have spoken may come upon me." There was an evident and just fear in his mind that God might ratify this sentence supernaturally, as He had done that upon Ananias and Sapphira, and also a persuasion that the prayers of the Apostles might avail to avert the consequences. Pastoral rebuke, then, of evident and obvious sins, is an exercise of the keys, and of the power of retention;—and it is an exercise which this age needs; for there can be no doubt that, what with the wish to retain our congregations at all hazards, the fear of giving offence and of driving some into schism, and the desire to be personally well spoken of, ministerial faithfulness is at a low ebb amongst us, and it seems as if those words had been erased from our Commission: "*Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.*"

St. Paul's vehement denunciation of Elymas the sorcerer, and the consequent infliction of blindness upon him, so much resembles the transactions of St. Peter already commented upon, that we need not make it a distinct subject of remark.

Then we come to St. Paul's excommunication of the incestuous Corinthian, the delivery of him unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord, and the retractation of that censure, when it had done its work upon the offender, and

had brought him to a sincere penitence. The passage has such an important bearing on our present subject, being in short the great Scriptural instance of the bestowal of Absolution, that it must be quoted at length:—

“Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love towards him . . . . . To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also : for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ ; lest Satan should get an advantage of us ; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

Lastly, we have the counsel of St. James as to the course of conduct which the sick member of Christ's flock should pursue. “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders (presbyters) of the Church ; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord : and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up ; and *if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*” Here again the miraculous part of the transaction is of course peculiar to the Apostolic age : the oil has been dropped, as being the sign of an extraordinary cure now no longer vouchsafed ; but the prayer of faith offered by the bedside of the sick forms still a part of our Ministry [see the Order for the Visitation of the Sick] ; and who shall say it is ineffective for spiritual healing in the face of those words, “If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him ;” in the face of those still more solemn words of the text, which confer the power of Absolution, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto

them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained?"

The whole Ministry of the Apostles was interwoven with miracles, and so far exceptional; yet no one will maintain that the Ministry of the Apostles died with them, though its temporary attributes may have done so. The power of Absolution then, which emanates from the Ministry, cannot so have died, the exercise of it being fully as much needed now as it was in the primitive days.

Yet it must be observed that, in the exercise by the Apostles of the power of remitting and retaining sins, there is no trace whatsoever of the form which the Roman Church has given to Absolution. There is not the smallest vestige of a practice of habitual confession to the Apostles by the members of their Churches, or of a formal absolution by them. There is not the slightest attempt on their part to usurp any judicial power over the human conscience; so far from it, that St. Peter's counsel to Simon Magus is (not, "Come to me for absolution," but) "Repent of this thy wickedness, and *pray God*, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

The elders, says St. James, are to *pray over* the sick man, that his sins may be forgiven. Why to pray; unless in acknowledgment that the forgiveness merely passed through them as channels, did not (and could not) originate with them,—that, in the absolute and judicial sense, "none can forgive sins but God only?" That men can act otherwise than ministerially in remitting sins is a doctrine as contrary to Holy Scripture as it is to Reason and the teaching of the early Fathers. And to

attribute to the Christian Minister the power of Absolution (when thus understood) is not more arrogant than to attribute other spiritual effects to his Ministry. No one denies the spiritual effect of God's preached Word upon the conscience, nor the spiritual effect of Sacraments, where duly administered and duly received, in strengthening and refreshing the soul. Yet these spiritual effects are in no wise due to the Minister, except as a medium: he cannot, except as an instrument in the hands of God's Spirit, touch a single conscience or comfort a single soul. The utmost that can be said of him is that ordinarily (not that God is bound to any means, or that He does not frequently show Himself to be independent of all means) God administers through His ordained servants the stores of His treasury of Grace. Why not also the stores of His treasury of Forgiveness?

God often converts souls, and edifies them, without any human instrumentality at all. Some dealing of His Providence, some passage of His Word, arrests the conscience of the sinner and awakens it to righteousness and repentance. The Holy Ghost is free as the wind, which is His great emblem in nature, and bloweth where He listeth, apart from the instrumentality which He Himself hath ordained. And similarly God can (and doubtless does) forgive sinners independently of His Church, speaking peace to many a conscience on the moment of its coming to Christ. Yet it appears to be no less true that God has ordained an instrumentality in the earth, which He delights to bless and honour; and that this instrumentality is the ordinary vehicle, through which mercy and other spiritual blessings reach us. O let us seek at His hand that sound judgment which fairly balances, and gives its due weight to, every testimony of His Word, and



that simplicity and honesty of mind which seeks not the establishment of preconceived views, but Truth, and Truth only.

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## LECTURE V.

### OF THE FORMS IN WHICH THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN AMERICA DISPENSES ABSOLUTION.

“*When He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*”—JOHN XX. 22, 23.

THE question whether the power of Absolution still resides in the Ministry of the Church will be found very much to resolve itself into the prior question, Whether there is an ordained Ministry of the Church at all? If a man chooses to deny that God hath committed to human Ministers the word of reconciliation; if, while he believes in Christianity, he disbelieves, as many do, in the Christian Society or Church, and resents altogether human intervention between God and the individual conscience, he may be easily confuted from Holy Scripture; but the confutation of him is not our present business. But if a man admits (as it is presumed all of us are disposed to admit) that there is an ordained Ministry, and that this Ministry is the usual, though not the exclusive, channel through which God conveys spiritual blessings, then he grants implicitly the power of Absolution as inherent in that Ministry. No one (at least no member of the Reformed Churches) imagines that any man, whatever his ecclesiastical position, can forgive sins absolutely, and as



a matter of his own arbitrament. Even the Apostles themselves never claimed to do this. He only can forgive in this manner, against whom the offence is committed; and as God is the Person who in all sin (even in that against our neighbour) is aggrieved, none but He can forgive in the absolute and judicial sense of the word. But if God dispenses forgiveness through certain human instruments, those instruments have derivatively the power of Absolution. And can this method of dispensing forgiveness be denied? If a person burdened with a sense of guilt, and in a state of mental depression, should stray into a Church, and there hear the message of free forgiveness and grace through Christ fully and faithfully set forth from the pulpit; if it should there be pointed out to him that what the heavy-laden conscience has to do is not to qualify itself for acceptance with God, but simply come to Christ, and embrace that acceptance which is already purchased by His Blood and Merit; and if on hearing this glad tidings, he goes away lightened and relieved, having found that joy and peace in believing, which are among the first-fruits of the Spirit,—what is this but God's dispensation of forgiveness to that man by the mouth of the Minister? It may not be technically called Absolution; but surely it is Absolution to all intents and purposes; it is as if the Minister, in the Name and by the authority of His Master, had said to that soul, "Thy sins be forgiven thee;" "The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die."—Suppose another hearer, conscious of still cleaving in his intention to some course which both Scripture and the moral sense condemn, to receive from the pulpit the equally true message that, whatever flatteries the deceitful heart may practise upon us, there is no salvation for sinners ob-

stinately holding by their sins ; and after receiving it, to go down to his house heavy and displeased, unable any longer to lay to his soul the flattering unction that his good impressions or his religious ordinances make him safe ; what is this but the binding of his sins on the man's conscience, the retention of his sins so far as man can retain them, that is, the declaration that they are retained upon a certain moral condition ?

Again : Baptism is said expressly to be for the remission of sins : “ Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord.” “ Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” It is an ordained vehicle of remission ; and the administration of it (like that of the other Sacrament) is lodged in the hands of those who inherit the charge given to the Apostles : “ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” If, then, a Christian Missionary, after long instruction and probation of a Catechumen, has satisfied himself of that person's fitness for Baptism, and administers to him this holy Sacrament, is not this a virtual absolution of the person who receives the Rite,—an absolution which is conveyed under the express commission and authority of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls ? And if, on the other hand, such a missionary should with good reason pronounce the Catechumen at present unfit for the Sacrament, should discover in him conduct which impeaches the sincerity of his motive in seeking for Baptism, or should think

him too ignorant of fundamental truths to be thus initiated into the School of Christ, and under this impression should say, "I suspend your Baptism for the present;"—few persons, I apprehend, would question his right and authority to act thus, while many, perhaps, would fail to see what is involved in the action. Surely such a suspension amounts to a retention of sins. For if St. Paul's sins, even after his conversion, could not be washed away, as he was informed, but by Baptism, how much less can we think that the sins of ordinary persons, whose religious impressions are much weaker than St. Paul's, can be otherwise washed away? To withhold Baptism, then, is to withhold the ordained vehicle of remission, and so virtually to retain sins.—Yet, in the exercise of the above functions, no one regards the minister as being more than a minister. The Grace of Sacraments, and the Grace which makes the Word of God effective for the relief of the conscience, is from God, and from God alone. The minister can do no more than negotiate the outward part; that is, preach the word faithfully to the ear, or administer rightly and duly the Sacrament. The Holy Ghost alone can communicate with the conscience and inner man; the minister, as in the Word, so in the Sacraments, is but the Holy Ghost's instrument for reaching the inner man.

The sum of what has been said is, that, if there is an ordained Ministry at all, the remission of sins must transpire, like a fragrant odour, from the exercise of every part of it; must transpire even when not formally announced, from the preaching of the Word, and the ministration of the Sacraments; and from simply not exercising the Ministry, retention of sins must follow.

But it may be asked, "May not the power of Absolution be exercised alone, independently of any other Ordinance of the Church?" No doubt it may. Provision is made in our Church for such an independent exercise of the power. And it is exercised in two forms, by way of authoritative declaration, and by way of intercession,—the latter of which is now more immediately before us, but of both of which we will now say a word.

I. First, in the Daily Service, the General Confession is immediately succeeded by "the Declaration of Absolution or Remission of sins, to be made by the Priest alone, standing; the people still kneeling."

The analysis of this formulary may be given in very few words. First, the Divine warrant, which the Minister has for making this solemn declaration, is exhibited to the people, as the ground of what is to follow: "Almighty God . . . . hath given power and commandment to His Ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins." The official proclamation is then made that God forgives all who are penitent and believing: "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel." The Congregation there present are then exhorted to pray that they themselves may come under the terms of the Divine Pardon, so that the Service now in performance may be acceptable, the life which shall succeed it pure and holy, and the end of all, the joy of Our Lord: "Wherefore let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance, that those things may please Him, which we do at this present; and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy; so that at the last we may come to His eternal joy."



It may be said this is merely a declaration that God pardons us, on condition of our being repentant and believing, and a declaration which any one is at liberty to make. And of course it cannot be disputed either that truth is truth, whoever speaks it, or that, in the intercourse of private life, any true disciple of Christ, without being an ordained Minister, might raise the drooping spirit of another, by pointing Him to those evangelical promises, which assure pardon to the penitent and believing, and which the faithfulness of God stands engaged to fulfil. But if to the ordained Minister, and to him alone, is committed the word of Reconciliation, the Minister alone can proclaim *with authority* the message of Reconciliation. (Others may tell it; may point it out in the Scriptures; he alone can declare it under the warrant and seal of the Most High.) It is one thing that the news of an amnesty, granted by a Sovereign to a rebellious but subdued province, should be blazed abroad among the people, find its way into public journals, and become the subject of general conversation, and mutual congratulation,—and quite another that the ambassador should come into the market-place in his robes of state, and there, producing his credentials with the royal seal affixed, should read the terms of the amnesty. The message may have reached the citizens through other channels; but the ambassador's appearance is a comfortable assurance of its reality. Now the Christian Minister is the ambassador of Christ, according to those words of St. Paul: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." In the face of the assembled Church, in the theatre of Christian ministrations, he appears publicly as His ambassador. His announcement under those circumstances of God's



message of forgiveness is no ordinary one, although long habit and familiarity with the words in which it is couched, may have blinded us to the dignity of the transaction. He is for the time being the King's Representative, and publishes the amnesty in his official character.

And if any should think lightly of a mere declaration of God's forgiveness, as if this were to assign too poor and tame a meaning to the high-sounding words, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," let him reflect that the Absolutions, which Our Lord administered while upon earth, were nothing but declarations of God's pardon, though founded (in His case) on His infallible knowledge of the state of the individual. Christ Himself (though of course He might have done so, had He chosen to stand upon the prerogative of His Divine Nature) never at any time said, "I absolve thee." "When He saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" ("have been, and are, forgiven thee," would be the exact rendering of the tense in our modern English; it is a past transaction, continuing in its results, which is announced). And observe that the power thus exercised by the Son of Man, although exercised in the form of a declaration, is described by Himself in the immediately succeeding context as being "power on earth to forgive sins."—Again, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for" (the token and evidence of which is that) "she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Now I suppose there is not one of us, whose heart would not leap for joy to hear such a declaration, though nothing more than a declaration, made respecting ourselves by Christ Our Lord. And why? Because of the infinite dignity of His Person;—because we know and

feel that to Him all authority is given in heaven and earth, and that His every word must stand. Now let us make the reflection, that of this authority to declare God's pardon of the penitent, He hath condescended to impart a certain share to His ministering servants; and that though He does not now give them, as He once did, the miraculous power of intuition into moral character, and by withholding this power signifies His will (as was pointed out in the last Lecture) that they should be very cautious in administering Absolution to individuals, and for the most part abstain from doing so altogether; yet the authority to declare forgiveness under the Divine warrant is still theirs; the declaration being now general to all who come under the terms, without any pretence to an insight as to who these may be.

And now one word as to the practical value which this declaratory Absolution of the Morning and Evening Service may have, and ought to have. In various ways, different schools of religionists seek for, and profess to find, an assurance of their forgiveness and acceptance with God. Some represent assurance as being involved in all genuine or saving faith, so that without assurance we have no hold whatever upon God's mercy through Christ. Others, of sounder judgment, think it a privilege extended by God to a few, and the recompense perhaps of their faithfulness. All would gladly welcome it, if they felt they could have it in God's way, without false confidence or presumption. Some profess to have found assurance in certain passages of Scripture, borne in upon their mind when in a state of religious susceptibility. Some have made a Scripture to themselves out of their own sanguine and presumptuous temperament, and have found in ecstasies and raptures of feeling God's

token upon them for good. But it will be safe at all events, and to humble souls it may be no less consolatory than safe, to seek our assurance in some token of Divine appointment. As to the simpler operations of our own minds on religious subjects—whether we with all earnestness cast sin behind our back, and rely simply on Christ for the expiation of it—we cannot be much at fault, if the mind is in a healthy state. Then, without any self-tormenting analysis of our motives, let us draw near to the House of God, where morning and evening the golden keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are exhibited for the consolation of penitent sinners. Let us listen intently to the message of God's pardon, pronounced by the lips of His commissioned ambassador. Let us take it to ourselves; if we be penitent and believing, it is ours. It is sent to us in the way of God's Ordinances,—a token upon us for good, surer than frames and feelings, which fluctuate, and better authorized by far than fanciful applications of Scripture to our own case. I doubt whether any assurance, which it is possible to obtain upon earth, will rest upon a much better foundation than that obtained in this way.

II. But it may be asked whether Absolution is simply declarative; whether it does nothing more than assure us, under God's commission, of a forgiveness which has been already granted by Him. Does it, it may be asked, effect nothing, but simply indicate what has been effected? The answer is given by the higher form of Absolution, which is now before us in the Communion Office, “and an option of using which is given in the Morning and Evening Prayer.” This higher form, it will be observed, is a Prayer by the Priest on behalf of the people. His office, like the statue of Janus, has two

faces; and looks in two directions. When announcing God's Will (and the terms of forgiveness and acceptance are the most important part of His Will) he looks towards the people. But he is also set to be an intercessor,—to sum up and present their wants before the Throne of Grace. And in this higher character exclusively we see him in the Communion Office, his face turned<sup>1</sup> towards the Lord, supplicating pardon, and all the glorious blessings which follow in the train of pardon, for his flock. Now nothing can be more certain than this, that prayer is effective,—that in some mysterious manner, which we are totally incapable of understanding, it influences the Will of God. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Moreover, we find intercessory prayer, offered by the chosen servants and messengers of the Most High, recognized, both in the Old and New Testament, as efficacious for those in whose behalf it is offered. Says God to Abimelech respecting Abraham: “He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.” And again to Job's friends, respecting Job: “Go to My servant Job; and My servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept.” And again we find Samuel recognizing it as part of his bounden duty to pray for the people: “Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.” Again, we have the notable instance of Elijah's intercession; which, as St. James informs us, availed first to close, and then to open, the windows of heaven. And again in the New Testament:

<sup>1</sup> I mean, *mentally*. The Rubric before this Prayer of Absolution directs that (*as to bodily posture*) the Priest shall *turn to the People*, when he says it. But in all Prayer God is addressed; and the petitioner *looks to Him mentally*.



“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and *pray one for another, that ye may be healed.*” And in how very large a majority of his Epistles does St. Paul assure his converts of his prayers for them, in the most forcible and emphatic manner!—Their names are written on his heart, he intimates, as were the names of the literal Israel on the high priest’s breastplate, and he is continually presenting them before God.

Now the intercessory part of the ministerial office, whereby the faithful pastor procures for his flock mercy and other spiritual blessings, is brought out in this precatory Absolution of the Communion Office. And you will observe how perfect the form is, and how much of wholesome doctrine underlies its simple phraseology; how it recognizes forgiveness and acceptance as being not the ultimate achievement of holiness, but the very first steps towards it; how it represents sanctification as being progressive, and grace as eventually merging into glory: “Almighty God, our heavenly Father, . . . . have mercy upon you, and pardon you” (this must be done, first, before sin’s power can be broken; broken however it must be, for the prayer proceeds), “pardon and *deliver* you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness” (not suffer you to rest in weak beginnings, or to count yourself to have apprehended, when your race is only just begun), “and bring you to everlasting life” (that is, finish the good work which He has begun in you), “through Jesus Christ Our Lord.”



The Absolutions found in the Primitive Liturgies run always in the form of Prayer or Benediction; and in some of them there was a reciprocal prayer for the priest by the people and for the people by the priest, which formed a most interesting feature of the Service, and which is nowhere represented in our Liturgy except by the mutual salutation, "The Lord be with you," "And with thy Spirit." While we are convinced, not only of the sufficiency, but of the excellence, of our Offices as they stand, we rather regret the loss of this expression of sympathy and mutual interest between the Pastor and his flock. It is, however, a loss which can easily be repaired in private. Let not the minister limit his intercessions for his flock to the utterance of the prescribed form (though this will be the flower and crown of them), but let him carry those intercessions with him into his closet, and urge them there with that fervour and perseverance which takes no refusal at God's hand; and let his flock do the same for him, and seek to help him at the Throne of Grace in bearing the burden of his trials, and discharging himself of his responsibilities; and then the spirit of the old reciprocal Absolutions would be preserved, even while the letter of them is dropped; and we should soon see a more efficient discharge of the ministry, arising from an increased desire on the part of the laity to co-operate with their ministers in Christian objects, and a more primitive zeal for the conversion of souls in those who wait at the Altar.

And when we speak of intercession as available in behalf of one another—whether it be the personal intercession of friends for friends, or the official intercession of the pastor for his flock—let us never forget that, independently of and apart from the prayer of the great

High Priest for us all, no prayer of man can have any efficacy whatsoever. It is only as united with His Intercession, it is only as taking its stand upon His finished and meritorious work, that any prayer, whether for ourselves or others, can receive an answer, or even gain a hearing. And the intercessory Absolution of which we have been speaking is only an earthly and dim echo of that prayer for His people, which Christ is offering in Heaven, and which, according to the laws of the Economy of Grace, takes up and absorbs into itself, and communicates its own virtue to, the supplications, prayers, intercessions, which His Church below makes for all men.

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## LECTURE VI.

### OF THE FOUR COMFORTABLE WORDS.

“Let us draw near . . . in full assurance of faith.”—

HEBREWS x., part of ver. 22.

THE fifteen Psalms which immediately succeed the 119th, are called Songs of Degrees, or Songs of the Steps. One explanation given of the term is that these Psalms were sung by the Levites, one upon each of the fifteen steps which led from the court of the women to that of the men in the Jewish Temple. We have compared the Communion Office to a venerable Cathedral, having its outer precinct, by which it is approached, in the Lord's Prayer, Collect for Purity, and Decalogue (which introductory parts of the Office speak of preparation and self-examination),

and its Sanctuary or Choir in that more solemn period of the Service which begins with the *Tersanctus*, and upon which we hope to enter in our next Lecture. The "Comfortable Words" from the mouth of our Saviour Christ, of St. Paul, and of St. John, are our Christian songs of the steps, which we sing as we pass from the Transept into the Choir, to join in the full burst of adoration which awaits us there.

Yes; we are about to join with Angels and Archangels, and all the company of Heaven, in singing the high praise of God. But this it is impossible we should do with a heart full of doubts and misgivings. An uneasy conscience, and a mind that wavers as to its own acceptance, is not in tune for praise. "It is requisite," says the Invitation, "that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience." To impart this full trust, and to assure and render quiet the conscience, is the great object of the Absolution, and of the Comfortable Words which follow it. Of the Absolution first. We pointed out in our last Lecture that one main object of Absolution, the great practical value of it, is the assurance of the penitent and believing sinner. We saw that Absolution was ministered by our Blessed Lord Himself in the form of an assurance: "Thy sins be" (or are) "forgiven thee." Our minds naturally crave after this assurance, and seek it sometimes in frames and feelings, which are conceived to be the inward witness of the Spirit of God, while really they are the signs of nothing more than a sanguine temperament, sometimes in certain texts of Scripture, twisted from their original connexion into a fanciful applicability to our own circumstances. Now as against these false methods of obtaining it, the

Church gives us good and solid grounds of assurance. God has commissioned His ministers officially to intercede for, and authoritatively to declare, forgiveness of sins to the penitent and believing. This ministerial commission then is the first ground of assurance which the Church here advances: the exercise of it is the first means by which she seeks to quiet the burdened and heavy-laden conscience. And the thread of sentiment which connects the Absolution with that which immediately follows it, is very apparent, at least to one who will not allow his familiarity with our services to deaden his mind to the significance of their various parts. It is as if the Church said to us: "You have heard the prayer offered in your behalf by God's accredited messenger of reconciliation, standing upon his commission, and acting in the Name of his Master; now then, lest any disquieting doubts should still remain upon your conscience, you shall hear what is better still, the words of Our Saviour Christ, and of those Apostles who spoke infallibly by the inspiration of His Spirit. Christ shall assure you, Paul shall assure you, John shall assure you. Every human minister has the treasure of the Gospel message in an earthen vessel. He is as full of infirmity, sin, and error, as you are yourself. And though this infirmity and unworthiness does not in the least detract from the efficacy of his ministrations, which 'be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise,' yet the message of mercy and peace conveyed through a purer medium, may haply be more satisfactory to thy mind. It shall come to thee then through the purest of all media, the holy and infallible Word of God, the Word which was spoken or written with a full foresight of thy difficulties, trials, and sins, not indeed by the human



writer, but by the Spirit who inspired him. In virtue of this perfect foresight, thou mayest reasonably expect to find some word in Holy Scripture specially meeting thy need, some word of which thou mayest without presumption or fanaticism conclude that it was designed for thee, and that thou mayest take it to thyself."

Now observe what words are chosen from Holy Scripture for this purpose. They are the broadest and freest evangelical declarations which it is possible to find in the whole volume, those which combine the largest amount of grace with the least amount of qualification in the persons to whom they are addressed. To use the language of the Seventeenth Article, they are "the promises of God as they are generally set forth in Holy Scripture," as distinct from "the counsel of God, secret to us," the consideration of which would only tend to baffle and disturb weak consciences. Let us look somewhat into the particulars of them.

1. First comes Our Lord's own famous invitation, embracing all who labour and are heavy laden; all, that is, who in any measure feel their sin to be a burden, and sincerely desire deliverance from it. If we have felt the galling of a wounded conscience, the galling of a corrupt nature; nay, if we have been only pressed hard with care and sorrow, and under this pressure truly turn to Christ as the only quarter in which peace and satisfaction is to be had, we come under the terms of this promise, and are at liberty at once to accept it. This is the beautiful song of the first step; and you will observe (for this observation will show the excellent method in which these sentences are arranged) that this first sentence carries us no further back than to Our Lord Himself: "Come unto *Me* . . . and *I* will give." To use



His own image, this is the call of the mother bird to the stray chickens, whereby she invites them to gather themselves under her wings, to be shielded by her from danger, and to be cherished with the vital heat which resides in her body. Not the children of Jerusalem only, but sheep, which are not of that fold, shall assuredly feel the glow and warmth of consolation, if at the sound of His Voice they will but betake themselves to that refuge.

2. Our Lord, however, never allowed His disciples to rest in Himself. To Himself He attracted them indeed, but it was to lead them on beyond Himself to the Father. He represented Himself as the Way, the Door (marvellous condescension! a way and a door being nothing in themselves, but in reference to the city or the chamber to which they lead), by which and through which alone access to the Father is to be had. And on one occasion He altogether put out of sight His own intervention in behalf of His disciples (though that of course we know to have been essential for them), and referred them to the Father's Love as an independent source of the blessings which visited them: "At that day ye shall ask in My Name: and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God."

So in the second of these admirably chosen sentences, Christ takes us back beyond Christ to God, and points out to us the Father's boundless Love as the origin of man's Redemption: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It would seem as if Grace itself could not go beyond

this in its freedom, in its comprehensiveness, in the simplicity of its requirements. In the first place, "the world" (i. e. all mankind, and not any narrow section of it) is represented as being the object of God's Love. The conscience of the sinner, ingenious often, when in a state of awakened susceptibility, to invent pleas against itself, cannot possibly say, "This word of comfort is not designed for me." If thou art but a man or a woman, it is thine; for, to use the phrase of St. Paul to Titus, it is God's "philanthropy" (or love of the human race) which is here announced by the Saviour. And to any thoughtful reader of His words it will at once suggest itself as a grand additional topic of consolation, that at the time when God evidenced His Love for the world by the gift of His Son, the world was in a state of rebellion. It was alienated, and an enemy in its mind by wicked works. It lay in wickedness; it was not seeking mercy at God's hand; it was not prostrate before Him in penitence and humiliation; it was defying Him. And no sooner did His Son appear and manifest God's perfections, than the world rose in arms against Him, and did what in it lay to root out the name and the memory of Him from the earth. Yet despite this malignant hostility on the part of the world, God's aspect towards it was one of Love,—“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”

Observe again (for this is another topic of rich consolation) that what God gave in evidence of His Love, was the only thing which could be a sacrifice to Him. If it had been possible that the human soul should have been redeemed by corruptible things, such as silver and gold, that it should have been redeemed by the gift of any creature, or of any aggregate of creatures,

God would have been none the poorer for the loss ; for in another instant He could have created by the word of His power other worlds, brighter and more beautiful than this. But His Son was a Person in the Divine Nature, whom in His exceeding Love to the world He rent from His Bosom, and parted with for a while, sending Him down into the pit of our ruin, to gather up and new-create into a vessel of honour, the fragments of our shattered humanity.

And finally, observe that all we have to do in order to avail ourselves of this gift is summed up in a single word, "Believe,"—"that whosoever believeth in Him," &c. The commandment is not far off, nor in heaven, nor in the deep, nor beyond the sea, but very nigh unto us, in our mouth and in our heart, that we may do it. A sincere turning away from sin, and a casting of all the burdens of the conscience on Christ,—this is belief ; and "whosoever believeth," so runs the Comfortable Word, such is the song of the second step, "shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

3. But against all declarations and evidences of God's Love whatsoever, a wounded conscience will insist, with much pertinacity, that never yet was sin so great and grievous as its own. An instance therefore will be consolatory, of one who was the chief of sinners having been forgiven. The song therefore of the next step is, "Hear also what St. Paul saith : This is a true saying and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*."

Observe now what manner of sins St. Paul's had been. They had been sins, by which the progress of the Gospel had been obstructed in the minds of others. Those that were entering into the Kingdom of Heaven,

Saul of Tarsus grievously hindered. He set himself in an attitude of defiant hostility to the Truth which alone can regenerate, sanctify, and save the soul. His hands reeked with the blood of Stephen, and indeed of other martyrs; for he speaks of the murders to which he had been an accessory in the plural number: "*Many of the saints did I shut up in prison,*" . . . . "*and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.*"

It may be, alas! that our influence hitherto has been morally unwholesome to those, with whom we have come in contact. It may even be that we have thrown temptation into the way of others, and seduced them into grievous sin. But can we seriously think that the hindrance offered by us to the Truth and Grace of God has been greater than that offered by St. Paul? Have we wrought more mischief in the spiritual world than he? Take into account, too, not merely the insult offered to Our Lord by Saul's high-handed opposition to His Truth, but the wounds and sufferings inflicted upon Him through His members: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Saul could not have inflicted more suffering upon the Lord, had his been the ruthless hands, which drove the nails into the extremities of His Sacred Person, or made long furrows with the scourge upon His back. Now independently of St. Paul's own personal salvation, the Lord had an object, we are told, in forgiving him, which had reference to the future of His Church: "that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." Avail thyself of the pattern, then. Why, in the infinite foresight of God, may not the long-suffering which He exhibited towards St. Paul, have been designed for thy



comfort and encouragement? Thou art a sinner of the deepest dye. Well; the more urgent is thy need of the good Physician; and the more glorious in thy case will be the exercise of His skill. "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

4. But the consolation of these sentences would be imperfect if one of them did not refer distinctly to the channel, through which pardoning Love reaches us. You have told me of God's Love, the burdened conscience might say; you have told me of Christ's Love and willingness to save; but must not God's claim upon me be satisfied? Must He not be just, as well as the justifier of him that believeth? The song of the last step answers this question gloriously: "Hear also what St. John saith; If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins."

"He is the propitiation for our sins;" that is, we sinners being represented in Him, He, when He suffered, paid our debt in full. Does God demand of us a perfectly holy life? Our Surety, the representative Man, the Second Adam, yielded to the law a perfect obedience. Does God's outraged justice demand that the transgressor should suffer the penalty of transgression? You and I have in Christ undergone this penalty; and Justice herself has nothing more to allege against us. Yet even this is but half of our comfort. Devout members of the Church have sometimes erred in occupying their attention too exclusively with the Death of Christ, in thinking too much of the past Atonement, or rather, in thinking too little of the present Intercession. The Apostle John in this precious verse presents the Saviour under both aspects. In His Cross, and Passion, and Precious Death, He is a Propitiation. In His glorified life, He is



an Advocate. He is there in Heaven to perpetuate the work, which on earth He but initiated. Not as though He offers Himself often, or that His Sacrifice can ever be repeated ; but that by His personal Advocacy it can be made continuous, and perpetuated in its results unto the end of Time. “ If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

If then it be asked *how* we are saved, the answer is ready : “ Through the satisfaction of Christ for us, while on earth, and through His present vigilant guardianship of our interests. We have a Propitiation, in answer to the demands of Justice. We have an Advocate in the court of Heaven, to plead the Propitiation.”

And so, fortified by these Scriptures, the devout worshipper passes into the Sanctuary of the Communion Office, which is jubilant with Praise. As the sound of the Seraphic Hymn breaks upon his ear from within, he (like the prophet Isaiah, who first heard that Hymn) is deeply abased at the thought of his own utter unworthiness to join in such praise : “ Wo is me,” cries he, “ for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” But Our Lord meets him on the threshold, and lifts him up with the invitation, “ Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and I will give you rest,” and then reminds him of the infinite Love of God. And St. Paul, a man of like passions with himself, reminds him by his own example that there is salvation even for the chief of sinners ; and St. John, the Apostle of Love, whispers a soothing word of satisfaction once made, and advocacy still continuing ; and so he is encouraged to “ draw nigh in full assurance of faith.”

And now we may confidently ask our readers whether the selection and position of these sentences is not admirable? Is it not clear that the more closely we look into the Liturgy, the more we shall discover a mine of study, of thought, of prayer, of theology, underlying the whole of it? Alas! that ordinarily preachers give it so little exposition, and worshippers so little thought! "It is the part of Art," says the proverb, "to conceal Art;" and the plain, nervous, chaste language of "the Book of Common Prayer," has this defect, that it does conceal from all but those, who will be at the pains to look below the surface, an amount of art, of care, of erudition, which probably is to be found in no other uninspired Book.

Let us, then, be thankful for this glorious heritage of our forefathers, "The Book of Common Prayer." And let us show our thankfulness by pondering the meaning of those words, which Sunday after Sunday slip so glibly over our tongues in worship, that they leave little or no impression upon our hearts.

It was the petition of the disciples that Christ would teach them to pray (would give them, that is, an authorized Form of Prayer), "as John also taught his disciples." It is a petition which for ourselves is already answered. The Providence and Goodness of God has given us a Liturgy, which is a faithful echo and expansion of Our Lord's own model Prayer. But as it is with the model itself, so it is with this faithful echo of it. The sound of both is in the ear, while the sense of neither is in the mind. Pray we then: "Lord, as Thou hast graciously taught us to pray, teach us to understand our prayers, so that, when we recite them, we may pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also!"

PART IV.  
THE CHOIR.



## LECTURE I.

### OF THE PREFACE OR THANKSGIVING, AND OF ITS RELATION TO THE TERSANCTUS.

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name.”—HEBREWS xiii. 15.

THE section of the Communion Service on which we now enter is perhaps of greater antiquity than any other. It can be traced back upwards of fifteen hundred years, and may possibly date from the Apostolic age itself. And accordingly it has a peculiar interest for the devout mind. There is something very solemn in the associations of an old Parish Church, in which generation after generation has worshipped God. It links us in thought to our forefathers in the faith of Christ, who in their days were the subjects of the same struggles, the same temptations as ourselves, and who found their refuge and strength in the mercy and faithfulness of the same Saviour. And a similar interest, only intensified in degree, attaches to a venerable form of Prayer, which has been consecrated by the use of many centuries. These simple and sublime words are the wings, on which many devout souls have been borne up in their flight heavenward,—thousands and millions of the faithful have found



no juster expression of the desire, the hope, the gratitude, the love, of which their hearts were full. While a form of Prayer is quite new and untried, we are unable to form a judgment as to its value. An experiment must be made of it before its excellences and defects can be recognized,—before we can see the fulness and depth of it, if it have those merits, or discover (what is soon discovered in most modern prayers) its shallowness of thought and feeling. What a precious heirloom, then, must those pieces of devotion be, of which the faithful from the earliest ages have made experiment, without finding in them any defect; with which successive generations have been perfectly satisfied as a vehicle of devout sentiment! And it is upon the consideration of a piece of this kind that we now enter.

This section reaches from the end of the Comfortable Words to the end of the Tersanctus, and is introduced by the following admonition and respond: “Lift up your hearts;” “We lift them up unto the Lord.” Observe the connexion of these words with what has preceded them. The heart cannot be lifted up, to join the heavenly choir in praise, unless it have first been relieved of its burden of guilt. This burden should be lifted off from it by the Absolution, which Christ’s ambassador has just pronounced in His Name, and by the comfortable sentences of Holy Scripture, which are so admirably calculated to undo any shackles which still hold it down to the earth. Thus released, the heart, like some balloon whose last detaining cord has been cut, is prepared to rise; and at the word of exhortation, “Lift up your hearts,” if it have hitherto followed the Service with the spirit and with the understanding also, it *does* rise.

An exhortation then follows to give thanks unto our

Lord God, and, the people assenting to this also, Thanksgiving and Praise immediately commence, Thanksgiving in the Preface (whether it be only the General Preface, or whether a special insertion, suitable to the season, has to be made in it), Praise in the "Tersanctus," or Hymn of the Seraphim, which at a very early period was engrafted into the Liturgy from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

1. *Thanksgiving and Praise.* Let us observe this indication, that we have now arrived at the highest part of the Service. For Thanksgiving and Praise are the devotional exercises of Heaven, and as such will endure for ever. They are analogous to Gratitude and Love among the Christian Graces. The necessity for Faith and Hope will have passed away, when things eternal become objects of sight, and the Christian is in the full enjoyment of the crown of righteousness. And in like manner prayer and meditation, the religious exercises corresponding to Faith and Hope, will find no place in a world where there is no want to be supplied, and no void in the heart which remains unfilled. But Gratitude and Love must endure throughout Eternity, and all other graces must merge into them, and lose themselves in them, as streams in the ocean. And similarly Thanksgiving, which is the utterance of Gratitude, and Praise, which is the utterance of Love, must for ever resound in the Heavenly Courts; and in these all other exercises of Devotion must be swallowed up.

2. Thanksgiving and Praise, then, are in certain respects kindred to one another, and have a general character in common. Yet they are carefully to be distinguished; and the present section of the Communion Office helps us very beautifully to the distinction. We

thank God for what He is to us,—for what He has done for us. We praise Him for what He is in Himself,—for the intrinsic beauty, goodness, and excellence of His character, apart from any benefits which we derive from it. We thank Him in the Preface. We praise Him in the T<sup>ers</sup>anctus. We thank Him for sending His Son in the flesh, yet “without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin;” for “destroying sin by the death of Christ, and restoring to us everlasting life by His Resurrection;” for allowing and causing a place to be prepared for us in heaven by our great Forerunner; for “bringing us, by the preaching of His Gospel, out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of Him, and of His Son Jesus Christ;” and for “giving us grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity.” We praise God, on the other hand, for His moral and natural beauty; for His Holiness, which is in itself a lovely attribute, however terrible to sinners, and for that Glory, whereof not Heaven only, but Earth also, is full; the Glory which struggles forth into expression in all the stars of the firmament, and in all the flowers of the earth, those “stars which in Earth’s firmament do shine.”

3. It will be seen, I think, from what has been said, that Praise is the higher exercise of the two. While, on the one hand, we must beware of the error maintained by Fénelon, Jonathan Edwards, and others, who stigmatized Gratitude as a sordid affection, and went so far as to say that no love of God is really the offspring of Grace, unless it be entirely disinterested, and free from all consideration of our personal advantage; on the other

hand we cannot, consistently with truth, deny that the Love of God for Himself, is a higher state of mind, and praise of Him a higher exercise, than gratitude and thanksgiving for His benefits. Nor can there be any doubt that, as the Christian grows in grace, he will grow also in disinterested love; that he will be able to appreciate more fully, not only the mercy and goodness of God to himself, but the excellence of the Divine Character; and that our advance or backwardness in this respect may serve as a useful criterion of our spiritual state. Not however that it is expedient or judicious to analyze too minutely our motives in this respect, or to tease ourselves because we cannot discover in our own minds sentiments towards God, which we judge to be purely disinterested. A generous gratitude to God,—the gratitude which does not make any mercenary computation of the number of His blessings, but thrills with an affectionate sense of His Goodness, and with a desire to please Him (and no other is genuine), easily passes into love, if indeed it be not love already; and Thanksgiving, when sincere, has a natural tendency to pass into Praise. The Thanksgiving of the Church, drawn from the consideration of the Saviour's Mission, the Comforter's Mission, and the Revelation to her of the Truth, mounts nimbly up the ladder, on which Angels and Archangels, and all the company of Heaven, are praising God for His Holiness and Glory.

4. We must offer one or two remarks in this place on one of the names of the Holy Communion, which has not yet come before us, but which now naturally presents itself for consideration. This service then has been called from very early times the Eucharist or Thanksgiving Service. Many able commentators sup-



pose that the word has the sanction of Inspiration; and that when St. Paul writes in 1 Cor. xiv. 16, "When thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" he is alluding to the great Thanksgiving Prayer which the Minister was in the habit of reciting at the Communion, when blessing the Bread and Wine, and to which the laity responded by a hearty and devout Amen. But whether or not this allusion can be satisfactorily made out, certain it is that the word "Eucharist" has been very long in use to express this rite; and that it gives us one main aspect of the Ordinance, and an aspect under which the early Church delighted to look at it. Our own Church adopts exactly the same view of the Ordinance, when she employs these words: "We entirely desire Thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this *our Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving.*" It is rather singular, not indeed that Thanksgiving and Praise should have been largely introduced into the Service of the Communion, but that they should have been considered so to form the core and nucleus of the whole, that the current name for the Ordinance should be the Thanksgiving Service. In this name you observe the elements are ignored; there is nothing to remind us of the Bread and Wine, or of the participation in them by the Communicants. Perhaps the early Christians saw so clearly the permanent element of the Ordinance, that the thought of this loosened the hold of their minds on that which is temporary. The participation of the Supper has a prescribed term, after which it must pass away. It is ordained to endure till, and only till, "the Lord come." But so far as the Service is one of Thanksgiving and



Praise ; so far as in it we join our voices with those of Cherubim and Seraphim, Angels and Archangels, and all the company of Heaven, so far it can never pass away. It is probable that in some part of the Christian world the Eucharist will be actually in celebration, when the hour for the Second Advent arrives. If it be so, while the earthly elements of the rite will of course be superseded by the Lord's appearance, and while there will be no longer any need of remembrancers of a Saviour who is present, yet the Thanksgiving Service will undergo no interruption, but will be taken up into the harmonies of Heaven ; and suddenly with those poor waiting (and perhaps persecuted) Christians, who are celebrating the Death of their Master, there will be a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory : Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High." And as at the marriage of Cana the weak element of water was transmuted in the Lord's Presence into a rich and genial wine, so the poor accents of these worshipping saints shall be turned into heavenly adoration by the sudden influx into them of joy and praise ; and the song, which the Seraphim have been singing from the beginning of the Creation, and which the Church of Christ has from the earliest times engrafted into her Liturgy, shall seem to them "a new song," when that Church, from being militant, has become triumphant.

Reader, if Thanksgiving and Praise are to be the ceaseless Service of the true Church of God throughout Eternity, are we qualifying ourselves for joining in them ? If Thanksgiving and Praise are the very atmosphere of glory, are we becoming, by the daily cultivation of a spirit of thankfulness—a sanguine, buoyant, elastic spirit—ac-

climatized to Glory? God will not place His people in Heaven by an arbitrary act of His will; there must be in every one who is to be transplanted thither a congeniality with the climate—a “meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.” Are our hearts then in tune for Thanksgiving and Praise? And if, through natural infirmity, not always so; if very often, through fatigue, or outbreaks of temper, or indolence, or the inroads of worldly carefulness it is otherwise, and the heart, instead of “singing and making melody to the Lord,” makes a jarring discord to His ear, do we (as soon as may be) take it down and tune it again by prayer, and study of God’s Word, and thought of His mercies? Are we careful to *keep* it in tune by a thankful remembrance of Christ’s Death in the way of His appointment? And do we bear in mind that thankfulness is not only cultivated by the Holy Communion, but also is (in a measure) a qualification for it? Do we reflect that if the Communion be the Church’s great Thanksgiving Service, our correspondence with it and fitness for it must stand to a great extent in genuine thankfulness of heart? That therefore any thing like murmuring at our lot, discouragement at our trials and failures, limitation in our own minds of Christ’s mercy, wisdom, and power, corroding cares, acrimonious feelings to others, must throw us out of harmony with the Ordinance, and act as direct disqualifications for it? For all these things are drawbacks and hindrances to the fulfilment of the precept, “Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice;” and it is only by the fulfilment of this precept in the general tone of our minds that we can live in a state of habitual preparedness for the Supper of the Lord.

We have spoken of the duty and importance, both in relation to our hereafter, and to preparedness for the Holy Communion, of cultivating the grace of thankfulness. And in this work there is one danger against which we should be on our guard. In mounting the ladder of Praise, we must not think scorn of the lower steps, or aim at the highest flights before we have achieved the more ordinary ones. Christ's Death is indeed the supreme subject of thankfulness, because it is the procuring cause of our Redemption; but even the smallest temporal mercies may prove real incentives to gratitude, without in the least drawing off the mind from the thought of the Saviour. The glow of health and animal spirits, the happiness and comfort of home, the pleasures of the intellect, the amusement from which the mind gains a temporary relief, and all the manifold small contentments of daily life, may be looked at in the light of the Atonement, considered as the purchase of Christ's Blood, and as won for us by His Intercession. Thus every little blessing and comfort may become a separate string giving a sound of its own, in the great harp of Praise. And that it may be so, it may be well each night to review, not our own conduct only, but the mercies with which God during that day has visited us; and spreading them out before the eyes of our minds in detail, to consider that it was for these small mercies, as well as for the greater blessings of Redemption and Sanctification, that Our Lord agonized and bled, and that these therefore ought to contribute their quota of impulse towards a generous and loving service of Him.

Finally; from the interesting variety in the Communion Service which is made by the Proper Preface at the five great Festivals, a practical lesson may be de-

rived. The Liturgy of the Church may usefully serve for a model in our private devotions, as well as for a guide in our public. And, when studied as a model, it teaches us this, that it is useful to have a general framework of prayer, and occasionally to vary that general framework by insertions suitable to the occasion. Self-examination will usually furnish topics for these insertions. Have I committed special sins this day? I will confess them. Have I received special answers to prayer? I will acknowledge them. But there are certain seasons in the Christian's life, with which peculiar associations connect themselves, and which should be allowed to give rise to special expressions of devout sentiment. Such are a Birthday, a New Year's Day, a Wedding Day, the day of the Baptism or Confirmation of a child, the anniversary of a friend's death, or of the day (if it have been a marked one) when we were first brought under the influence of Religion. Let some allusion to the event in the way of humiliation, or petition, or thanksgiving, be woven into our daily prayer; and thus let the transaction be taken up into, and become part of the aliment of, our spiritual life. For not only the Church in general, but each individual soul, has its own seasons of special humiliation and special joy. And to avail ourselves of these seasons, as incentives either to a deeper penitence or a livelier thankfulness, is a point of holy policy, which will be found to contribute greatly to the liveliness and reality of our devotion.

For the besetting snare of all stated prayers offered at set times is formalism; and this snare is best avoided by a certain amount of variety, while the general platform of our prayer is the same. Our minds at different periods are in a different key. When we tune them for



devotion, let us manage them adroitly in reference to that key, and try to bring out its peculiar character, so that all their moods may be made (under Grace) to minister to God's glory. Thus shall we conduct our private devotions in the spirit of the Proper Preface, which gives to the Church's Thanksgiving Service a different complexion at different seasons, celebrating at one time the Incarnation, at another the Resurrection, at another the Ascension of our Lord, now the descent of the Holy Ghost, and now the Revelation of the full mystery of the Godhead.



## LECTURE II.

### OF OUR COMMUNION WITH THE ANGELS, AND OF THE TERSANCTUS.

"We are come . . . to an innumerable company of Angels."

*Προσεληλύθατε μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων.*—HEB. xii. 22 (part).

THE Holy Communion, as its name denotes, is that Ordinance of the Church, in which we have the most intimate communion with Our Lord, which it is possible to have upon earth. The assimilation of the elements to the body, their absorption into the system in the ordinary process of nutrition, is a sign of the closeness of our union with Christ, which is by this Sacrament cemented. Now communion with Christ involves communion with all those who are at one with Him; the Communion of Saints is wrapped up in it. *Communion, first, with distant saints*, separated from us, it may be, by mountain range and ocean, by many a weary tract of land and sea.



One great feature, therefore, of the Communion Service, is a grand intercession with the "God who has taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men," "for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth." *Communion, next, with departed saints.* Their place upon earth knows them no more; their relations with those who are left behind seem to be altogether suspended; they have ceased to be, what they once were, living influences, shaping the character of those among whom they sojourned; even their memory becomes less and less vivid with time, and fades in the mind of those once intimate with them, till it approximates to a name; but they are with Christ, and we, too, being with Him in the Holy Communion, if we receive this Ordinance faithfully, they are certainly (although invisibly) with us in the union of His Mystical Body. We definitely call them to mind, therefore, in the celebration of the Rite, "blessing and praising God's holy Name, for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear, and beseeching Him to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of His heavenly kingdom."

But finally, in Communion with Christ, *Communion with the Angels is involved.* And accordingly this Office contains two Angelic Hymns, one of which precedes, and the other follows, the administration, the first being the Hymn which the Prophet Isaiah heard the Seraphim chanting in the Temple, the other the jubilant Song of the Angels, who appeared to the shepherds on the night of the Nativity.

Of the Communion of the Church of Christ with Angels, a doctrine which is brought out by this feature of the Service, the secret and history is as follows. It

is true indeed that, before the Incarnation, angels were occasionally sent on errands to God's faithful servants for their warning, encouragement, or succour. But at that time the union between Heaven and Earth, which was to be made by the Incarnation of the Son of God, lay only in the Divine Counsels,—had not yet been effectuated; and therefore the participation of the Church in the worship of the Heavenly Host could not be as yet declared,—man could not as yet be formally admitted to join in the services of Heaven. A glimpse of what those services were, had indeed been afforded to the Prophet Isaiah. "In the year that King Uzziah died," he saw the Seraphim surrounding the throne of the Lord, and crying one to another, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole Earth is full of His Glory." The Evangelist St. John, in referring to this striking scene, informs us that his Master was the Person in the Divine Nature, whom Isaiah on that occasion saw: "These things," says he, after quoting some of the words of the sixth chapter, in which the vision is recorded, "said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of *Him*." The information is most interesting; for it not only establishes most clearly the Divinity of Christ, but also furnishes a connecting link with what follows in the history of man's participation in the worship of Angels. From all eternity, "before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made," Christ, the Representative to creatures of the Invisible God, had been adored in these strains by the Seraphim. Now when He came down from heaven to undertake the work of our Redemption, these worshipping Seraphim must of necessity attend Him hither as His heavenly escort. One of them goes before, and announces His

Nativity to the Virgin. And as soon as that Nativity actually occurs, the full choir is heard hymning the great event,—not in the Temple (which represented Heaven), but in the outlying fields of a small town in Judæa. Now observe how their language is modified by their circumstances. In the hymn which they chanted in Heaven they had indeed made mention of the Earth, but merely as the theatre of the glory of God, the stage on which all that is proceeding, even the disturbing agencies of the human will, work together for the accomplishment of His purposes and the triumph of His cause. But while there is a glorification of God in the heavenly hymn, *there is no indication of any mind of love or kindness towards man.* The interests of Humanity do not there come into view; for even the condemned will glorify God in His Justice. But in the Hymn of these same angels, *when drawn down to earth in the train of the Redeemer*, while still the glorification of God occupies the chief place, mercy towards erring man is proclaimed in no indistinct tones: “Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, goodwill towards men.”

The change of tone is very striking. The Angels seem to imply, even if they do not say, “Since God is now at peace with you through His union with your nature, we, the Angels, God’s heavenly worshippers, joyfully salute you, and admit you into the fellowship of our worship, and bid you join your voices with ours.” But not only at the Nativity do the Angels appear in attendance upon their Master, but, as you well remember, at all the more critical periods of His career. Angels ministered unto Him after the Temptation; they strengthened Him in His Passion; they waited at His sepulchre, to assist and announce the great trans-

action; they appeared at the Ascension, and doubtless in that hour formed His escort and joined His triumph, crying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Thus He was the true Jacob's ladder, set up upon Earth in His Humanity, and reaching to Heaven in His Divinity, upon which Angels were continually ascending and descending; the true and God-built tower of Babel, by which the Almighty gives to sinful man access unto Himself, and on whose winding stair the shining hosts of Heaven pass to and fro continually, bearing upwards the tribute of human prayer and praise, and downwards the messages of Grace and Peace.

But we must not regard our Blessed Lord's humanity as isolated from that of His redeemed people. We cannot separate from Him His Mystical Body the Church, with which He is indissolubly one. There is a Jacob lying beneath the ladder, to whom the Angels appear in a comfortable vision. There is a city clustering at the base of the tower, into which the heavenly messengers pass along the winding stair. The passage being fully opened by the finished work of Christ, which re-established the old highway of communication (formerly blocked up) between God and man, the Angels are now in constant intercourse with the heirs of salvation, succour and defend us upon earth, on occasions when we little dream of their presence, and yield us a true sympathy in all our trials. And accordingly the Apostle says, "Ye are come to an innumerable company of Angels." He is describing the Christian Church in its present, not in its future state; and pointing out the grand sweep which it takes into the invisible world, a sweep embracing not



only “the spirits of just men made perfect,” but also principalities and powers in heavenly places. And that Our Lord would not have us forget these last, or put them out of sight, is clear from the fact that in that perfect Prayer which He has put into our mouths,—a Prayer so extremely concise, that we cannot conceive any thing impertinent or superfluous to have been introduced into it,—He directs our eyes toward the services done by Angels to Almighty God, as the model of the services we ourselves should render Him. “Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.” This is the Prayer which He brought with Him to domesticate it upon earth, the Prayer which savours of Heaven in every part; for the first and principal clause of it, consisting of the three first petitions, is for the glorification of God, “the hallowing of His Name, the coming of His kingdom, and the doing of His will upon earth;” and the needs of man do not even come into view till the subsequent part of it. And this “Tersanctus” which we have in the Communion Service, may be said to be a fragment of the praise of Heaven, which our Lord drew down with Him, when He came to help and raise poor fallen man,—a few notes from the music of seraphic harps, to be taken up by our faltering voices as best we may. There is indeed an awfulness about the strain, which might well discompose and discourage the minds of sinners. The Angels who never fell, speak of God to one another as holy; they make mention of His glory as filling the whole earth. The prophet who first saw the vision and heard the words, could not endure either the sight or the song. He felt painfully the want of harmony between such worship and his own sinfulness, the unsuitability of the anthems of heaven to the defiled lips of grovelling man.



“Woe is me!” cried he, “for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.” He is strengthened, however, by one of the Seraphims, who takes a live coal from off the altar, and laying it upon his lips, says to him: “Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” And we are to be strengthened to sing this Hymn of the Seraphim, all sinful and defiled though we be, by the thought of the Atoning Death of Christ, which we commemorate in the Lord’s Supper, by faith in His broken Body and spilled Blood, which the Ordinance both represents to us and conveys. In this Sacrament Christ is evidently set forth before our eyes crucified amongst us. And in the confidence which that spectacle gives us, we need not fear to open our lips, and praise God in the same accents as those employed by “Angels and Archangels and all the company of Heaven.”

We have seen, then, how it is that the Church of God is admitted to participate in the worship of Angels. Christ brought that worship with him down to our planet, and, having by His work of Atonement and Mediation restored the relations between Heaven and Earth, which the Fall had interrupted, embraced in one community men and angels, and bequeathed to His redeemed Church the anthems of glorified spirits. But it is given us to know not merely that we are privileged to be fellow-worshippers with the Angels; but that they feel an interest in us, which makes this communion a reality on their part. Not only are they joined with us in Christ in a common bond; but they love us and care for us. Their Lord and ours has assured us that there is joy in

the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth ; that each sincere conversion makes the harps of Heaven vibrate with a new anthem of praise ; and that the heavenly host are so far from looking down upon human infirmity, of which one would suppose that the perfection of their nature might lead them to think scorn, that the highest of them,—those who do always behold the face of our Father which is in Heaven,—exercise a special guardianship over little children, the feeblest members of the human family.

And now let us consider what conclusions of practical value our subject may have suggested.

There is no doubt, then, that we should be much more strong, much more confident, and much more fervent in our worship of God, if we did not feel alone in it. We struggle against our sins upon our knees ; and we do so oftentimes very feebly, and with intermittent energy, because we secretly think that no one but ourselves is interested in the struggle, or has the smallest concern in our victory. All of us remember the old fable of our childhood about the bundle of sticks, each of which might easily be snapped in sunder by itself, but which, bound together, defied the efforts of a strong man to break them. The moral is most instructive. It is a well-known phenomenon of our nature that the mere consciousness of sympathy and united effort will give to the will a strength almost invincible. This was the great secret of success in the Temperance movement. The detestable vice proved too strong for a man, so long as he struggled against it as an individual, and found his only resources in the approbation of his own conscience. But no sooner did he league with others under a com-

mon banner against this moral enemy,—no sooner did he thus gain the assurance that others were fighting all around him at his side,—than he prevailed against the strong temptation and eventually became master of his own will. It was a great lesson to this effect, that without the assurance of hearty sympathy and co-operation we can never achieve any signal success against our spiritual foes.—But then must not God have known the constitution of our nature in this respect; and in the Gospel, which is so wonderfully framed to meet all the wants of that nature, must He not have made some provision, by which this principle shall be enlisted on the side of Truth and Godliness? We entirely believe that He has done so. In that Creed, which reduces the whole of Christian Doctrine to the fewest and most essential Articles, we avow our belief in “the Holy Catholic Church, (which is) the Communion of saints.” Rightly understood, this Article nerves us for righteousness almost as much as some of the foregoing and more fundamental. We avow our belief that in our struggles against sin, the world, and the devil, we are leagued together under a common banner with all the living servants of God, with those who departed this life in His faith and fear, and with holy Angels. But do we realize the belief, or is it merely speculative? While we pray, for example, do we feel the power of the thought that thousands are lifting up their hearts at the same time,—many of them more faithful than ourselves,—and that of these thousands some are actually supporting us in their prayers, supplicating God to “strengthen such as do stand; to comfort and help the weak-hearted; to raise up them that fall; and finally to beat down Satan under His people’s feet?” Have we ever reflected that

there is probably no instant of time, at which some members of the Christian Church are not approaching the One Father, through the One Mediator, under the influence of the One Spirit, and virtually advancing by faithful prayer the coming of the kingdom in the hearts of all? Beautiful is that comment of Bishop Andrewes upon the words of St. Paul, "The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" :

"But is thy spirit and mine unutterable, which often is no spirit at all, and often a cold one? Surely this can hardly be said of the individual Christian. But then there is no day, and no moment, in which God is not supplicated by the faithful, by one more fervently, by another more tepidly; and because all the faithful together make up one dove, from this dove proceed the unutterable groans, that is to say from the groans of all for the common behoof, which groans, as they are united together in the Body of the Church, benefit all."

But there are others interested in our worship of God, and in our struggles against sin, besides those who still sojourn upon earth. There is an innumerable company of angels, watching our conflict, sorrowing with a pure and beautiful sorrow at our unfaithfulness, rejoicing on our return to God and mingling their accents with our praises. If it pleased God to make transparent for a moment the veil of gross matter, these Angels would be seen thronging the earth on their errands of love, frequenting the assemblies of Christians at all times, and specially whenever the Master's Dying Love is commemorated, and His Flesh and Blood are in a mystery partaken of by the faithful. Christians, not only "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world;" but also "they that be with us are *more than they that be with*



*them."* The fallen, the condemned, the accursed, represent after all only a small section of God's creatures. There is an innumerable company of the Heavenly Host leagued together under Christ against the rulers of the darkness of this world. You never strive alone. Not only is there an outflowing of most tender compassion towards you from the bosom of the Divine Master; but every pure and good intelligence in the Universe is on your side, whether all be conscious of it or not. There are thousands upon Earth who are at present being visited with temptations which are the exact counterpart of yours. They are triumphing over them in the might of Christ; why should not you? The dead are waiting and watching in Paradise for the hour, when God shall "accomplish the number of His elect, and hasten His Kingdom." And as in a starlight night a thousand eyes of fire look down from Heaven upon the benighted traveller, so in your dark pilgrimage through this world your course is run under the eyes of principalities and powers bent down upon you from another sphere. Nor do you ever worship God alone. That infirm and feeble prayer of thine, of whose impotence you are so painfully conscious, is attracted into the strong current, first, of Our Lord's perfect Intercession, and, secondly, of the unutterable groans of the Holy Spirit in the Church. And when thou givest praise, thou strikest a note which vibrates through the whole Creation. Praise is an impulse in the spiritual world which radiates far and wide from the centre which sent it forth. It is taken up and echoed back by all creatures in Heaven and Earth. The low, faltering, and discordant notes, which it may have had originally, are overborne by, and drowned in, the loftier melodies which absorb it. And these melodies



are from the harps of Cherubim and Seraphim, who unto God continually do cry, recognizing in their anthems the grand multiplicity of the Divine Praise, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of Thy Glory."

Thoughts like these, however, must be used not as an excuse for wilful languor in worship, but as an encouragement under infirmities of the flesh, when the spirit is willing to worship God. And indeed they have a warning for us as well as an encouragement. For if Praise be so august an exercise, and if in it we join our voices with those of the hierarchy of Heaven, we must see to it that we do our utmost to get our hearts in tune before engaging in it. Words of angelic praise upon the lips, without any spark of angelic love and zeal in the heart, what a profaneness must they be, and what a mockery! Let us ask God, lest we should entangle ourselves in such impiety, that He would touch our lips, like those of His Prophet, with a live coal from off the altar, kindling our affections of hope, and zeal, and love, and making us more warmly aspire to those joys which are at His Right Hand.



### LECTURE III.

#### OF THE PRAYER OF ACCESS.

"They feared as they entered into the cloud."—LUKE ix. 34.

THE true temper of devotion is fervour mingled with humiliation. On the one hand any thing like coldness in the worship of God is unworthy of the Love which He has shown us; unworthy of the position into which

our Redemption and Regeneration have brought us. To stand at a distance from the Throne of God with chilled hearts and tied tongues, is virtually to regard it as a Throne of Judgment, and forget that it is a Throne of Grace. But, on the other hand, while we ought to sun ourselves in the glorious privilege of access to God through Christ, we should never lose sight of reverence and godly fear in our worship. Our position merely as creatures demands this. Angels when they worship, though sinless, cover their faces and their feet with their wings. Our momentary dependence upon God for all things, if that stood alone, should make us profoundly reverential in our approaches to Him. But it does *not* stand alone. Our nature is not merely dependent, but deeply tainted with sin. We are not only dust and ashes, but sinful dust and ashes, taking upon ourselves to speak to the Lord. The three disciples on the holy mountain were privileged to see the glory of their Master, to hear the Father's own voice drop from the vault of Heaven, and to enter into the bright cloud which was there (as in the Tabernacle and former Temple), the symbol of the Divine Presence. But favoured and privileged as they were, it is significantly said that they "feared as they entered into the cloud."

Now the circumstances of the devout communicant at this period of the rite may admit of a comparison with theirs. We are about to enter into the closest communion with God which it is possible to have upon earth. We are approaching God's Table to be fed "with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ." We have just been admitted to the worship of Heaven, and have joined with Angels and Archangels, and all the company of Heaven, in the

adoration and glorification of the Holy Trinity. Our glorified Saviour, who is invisibly present in the midst of the two or three gathered together to celebrate His Death, waits to receive us. And as on the Mount of Transfiguration two saints stood by and assisted at the great solemnity, and spoke of the decease of Christ, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, so we have heard in the Comfortable Words the voices of two New Testament saints, St. Paul and St. John, witnessing to us that Christ Jesus came into the world to save even the chief of sinners, and that we have in Him a Propitiation and a living Advocate. Here, then, are the Saints bearing testimony to the Lord. Here are the Angels, with whose voices we presume to join ours. Here is the Lord Himself, going to make Himself over to us, not by a carnal communication, but in a mystery which transcends our comprehension and our power of expression. What wonder if we fear, and once again prostrate ourselves, as we enter into this bright cloud? What wonder if, after joining in the Hymn of the Angels, we shrink once again under a sense of our unworthiness to partake of these holy mysteries, and, falling upon our knees before yet the celebration of the rite mounts to its climax, humbly say, "We do not presume to come to this Thy Table, O Lord; trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies?"

We may here take the opportunity of observing that the same mixture of fervour and humiliation characterizes our whole Book of Common Prayer. Special instances of it are to be found in the Litany, in the Visitation of the Sick, and in the Burial Service. But there is no instance which in depth and pathos of devotional feeling exceeds that before us. The sinking from the light and

music of the Seraphic Hymn into the abject self-abasement of the Prayer of Access, is one of the most striking of the many striking features of this Service. It is like the sudden descent of some aëronaut from the brightness and glow of a noontide sky into a dark glen, where great trees interlace their branches, and leave only patches of light on the greensward below.

If the principles on which our Liturgy is constructed may serve as a guide to us in private devotion, we may learn an important practical lesson from what has been said. The mixture in due proportion of reverence and warmth is the perfection of worship, which must be aimed at in the closet as well as in the Church. How is it to be obtained? By keeping the principle before our minds in the first place.—Then, as to details, it will give freedom and life to prayer and praise, if we do not entirely confine ourselves to set forms; if we vary and enlarge upon our set prayer whenever and at whatever point the mind feels disposed to do so; if we meditate much beforehand on God's infinite willingness (as overwhelmingly evidenced by the gift of His Son) to give us all things necessary for our soul's health, and to cover, by a fresh outflowing of parental love, all past sins. At the same time, let all tendency to diffuseness and overfluency in prayer be kept in check by still holding (if I may speak figuratively) the bridle of the form. Prayers purely extemporaneous run the risk of irreverence, just as prayers purely recited run the risk of formalism. And let there always be a pause before the commencement of stated prayer, to call to mind the awfulness of the Divine Majesty, and the greatness of His condescension in allowing us through His Son to address Him.

The Prayer now before us divides itself into three



parts. There is, first, the humiliation of the earlier part. There is, secondly, the petition of the latter part. And from the first of these we pass to the second by the bridge of the following sentiment: "But Thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy." From the consideration of this property in Him with whom we have to do, we encourage ourselves to prefer our petition to Him, vile though we be.

We need not do more than exhibit shortly the salient features of the two chief branches of the prayer.

1. Our self-abasement expresses itself here in the language of Holy Scripture. We take up and echo back the sentiment of one, who in her day was a successful petitioner for Christ's mercy, and we say, "We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table." Now consider the position into which we throw ourselves by the use of these words.

The communicant's many and grievous sins fly in his face, as he is about to present himself at God's Board; God seems to discourage him, as Christ discouraged the Syrophœnician, by alleging that this high privilege is for those who have lived as reconciled children, not for those who, by reason of their wilful defilement and their frequent relapses into unclean living, are rather to be termed dogs. And the sinner pleads guilty to God's charge. He is a dog. Nay, he is worse far than that Gentile, who first assumed the term as expressive of her own position. She never had his privileges. She never stood in his relation to Christ. She never was an adopted child. And so he will not even stand upon his claim to be treated as she was treated. Not only is he unworthy of the acceptance which she found, but of that which she sued for. He takes rank below her. He has



forfeited even the crumbs. "We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table."

Now is not this language calculated to awaken in the mind a whole train of humbling (and yet most consolatory) reflections, and to stir in the heart a profound self-abasement, admirably suited to the occasion? It is as if the Liturgy invited us to throw in our lot with those who, in the days of His flesh, sought Christ under some distress, and, by perseverance in their applications to Him amid discouragements, obtained relief. We are reminded by this slight allusion how no petitioner who so applied was ever sent away empty; how the treasure-house of His bounty was always thrown open to them eventually, if only they persevered in their petition. This train of associations once summoned up, the thought rushes into the mind with consolatory force: "Why should not I be as they? Why should not my persistence, my urgent entreaty, in spite of all the grave charges which my conscience (nay, which Christ in my conscience) seems to urge against me, be as greatly honoured as theirs was?"

And what an answer, moreover, is here to the scruples of those sincere Christians, who allege the consciousness of their own unworthiness as a reason for absenting themselves from the Table of the Lord: "We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table!" You could not use these words sincerely, if you imagined that you were worthy. The very imagination would of itself render you unworthy. In order to justify this language, there cannot be too deep a feeling of our own corruption, of the poverty and inadequacy of our repentance, our faith, our love. Surely we ought to realize the words which we use on this most solemn

occasion. And how can we realize our unworthiness to gather up even the crumbs, if there be remaining in the heart a particle of self-complacency ; if we are well satisfied with our religious attainments, and know not experimentally that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ?

From this beautiful and appropriate reference to the Gospel narrative in the Prayer of Access we may learn the wisdom of enriching our devotions by similar allusions. Most of Our Blessed Lord's miracles suggest words and topics which we may use in this manner. Thus, for example, thinking of ourselves as defiled with the leprosy of sin, we may say to Him, when we kneel before Him, as the leper of old said, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Regarding ourselves as utterly helpless, we may address to Him the touching appeal of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, "Lord, I have no man to help me." When by the changes and chances of this mortal life, we seem to be tossed on the waves of this troublesome world, we may cry to Him as Peter cried, when his faith failed him on the literal wave, "Lord, save me ;" or, as the disciples cried in the tempest, "Carest Thou not that we perish ?" We may entreat Him, when we feel how deaf we are by nature to His word, and how dumb in His praises, to say unto us, "Ephphatha," and to open, and keep open, the avenues of communication between our souls and the spiritual world. Or laying ourselves simply before Him, in all the helplessness of our natural infirmity, as the paralytic was laid by his friends, we may look up wistfully into His face for the inspiring word of Absolution, "Son, be of good cheer : thy sins be forgiven thee." It is astonishing how much life and warmth may thus be given to

our prayers. There is in many of those stories of the Gospel cures a peculiar pathos; and there is no surer way of appreciating that pathos than by identifying ourselves with the sufferer, and finding our own case represented in his. Thus, moreover, our devotions will savour, as all devotions should savour, of the Word of God; and we shall cultivate a unity of experience with those early believers, who lived in an age far less artificial than our own, when Divine Truth came into contact with the heart of man freshly and strongly, and not through the diluting medium of conventional religious phraseologies. This it is which constitutes the real charm of the prayers of Bishop Andrewes. They are almost entirely Scriptural. And as the Scriptural language of devotion, being the utterance of the Holy Spirit in man, comes home to the heart with a power peculiarly its own (witness the Psalms of David, which have been ever the great Prayer Book of the Church), these Devotions, though not particularly attractive at first, yet when used and tested by experience (the only way of ascertaining the real value of Forms of Prayer), have been so much approved, that the compilation ranks, perhaps, as the first devotional work of the English Church, and it has been said, and re-echoed by many a devout soul: "Pray with Bishop Andrewes for one week; and he will be pleasant in thy life; and at the hour of death he will not forsake thee." Not that these devotions are the effusions of the Bishop's own mind. There is scarcely an original page in the whole volume. What is so attractive is his marvellous power of manipulating Scriptural phrases and incidents,—a power analogous to that, which the expert musician wields over the notes of an instrument,—the gift of bringing out the full force and

power of Scriptural narratives, Scriptural pleadings, Scriptural expostulations, Scriptural promises on God's part, and Scriptural utterances of the deepest things which there are in the human heart. The Word in his hands is like a great harpsichord; and by his masterly and flexible management of its notes, he brings out the whole compass of its devotional sentiments. But it is one of those books which cannot possibly be appreciated otherwise than by an experimental acquaintance with it.

2. The petition, which forms the latter part of this beautiful prayer, is for such a participation of the Ordinance, as may ensure to us its high and mysterious blessings: "Grant us so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed by His most precious Blood." The salient feature of this part,—that which challenges observation as being a departure, not only from ordinary religious phraseology, but from modern ideas,—is the distinct reference to the body as partaking in the blessings of Redemption. Certainly this clause is not conceived in the strain of popular theology. There is in the minds of many religionists a floating notion, entirely in accordance with the heresy of the ancient Gnostic, that the body is the root of all evil, and that the liberation of the soul from matter is necessary to ensure its perfection. But even where such a view as this would be explicitly disavowed in terms, there often exists an idea that Christianity is thoroughly and exclusively spiritual, that it has nothing at all to do with the material part of man. The Scripture, however, expressly says, not only that the body is destined to be hereafter the subject of glorification ("if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from



the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also *quicken your mortal bodies* by His Spirit that dwelleth in you”), but that it is destined to be at present the subject of sanctification: “Now the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly*; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It tells us that Christ took, and has carried with Him into Heaven a human body, “with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man’s nature,”—a fact from which it is easily concluded that matter, as matter, cannot have in it any inherent evil. And it exhorts us, finally, to convert the members of our bodies into the materials of a sacrifice, which bodies therefore must be capable of a real consecration: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your *bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Now the two Sacraments (among other aspects of them) are God’s great protest to this effect,—that the religion adapted to man is not exclusively spiritual. God in these Sacraments uses the things of sense as a vehicle of spiritual blessings, by way of teaching this among other lessons, that the matter of which we are compounded is to be embraced, as well as the spiritual element of our nature, in the great Scheme of Redemption. And as regards the second Sacrament in particular, Our Blessed Lord has used words, which seem in some mysterious way to connect the faithful reception of it with the Resurrection of the Body unto Life: “Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

A Communion Service, therefore, would, I appre-



hend, be imperfect, if there were no recognition in it of the consecration and sanctification of the Body, of its receiving in this Ordinance the stamp and the pledge of its eventual glorification. According to this view of the subject, the clause before us ("that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body") is an integral feature of the Communion Office,—one which brings out a distinct and separate aspect of Christ's sacrificial work, which we are now commemorating. The sin of the soul has penetrated into and defiled the soul's tenement, the body. Hence comes our liability to disease, and the sad enfeebling of our mental powers by the defectiveness or impaired action of some one bodily organ in each one of us. When the soul is sanctified, when the will receives a new direction, and the affections a new tendency,—the impulse flows on towards, and reaches the body, the members of which are henceforth yielded as instruments of righteousness unto God. It is true, indeed, that the body is "sinful," and therefore intrinsically unworthy of this glorious consecration. But through our union with Christ (the union which by a faithful reception of this Sacrament is cemented) the sinful body is made clean by Christ's Body (the Body in which He bore our sins upon the Tree), even as the sinful soul is washed, through the spilling of the Blood of Christ in expiation of sin. Purified through this union, the body becomes fit to be a sacrifice, and accordingly is yielded unto God in the words of the Post-Communion Prayer: "Here we offer, and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and *bodies*, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

Such is the doctrinal significance of the clause before us. God grant it may not be to us a barren dogma, but that we may carry it out to its legitimate practical

results! Surely if the body shares in the blessings of Redemption, and receives the dignity of a consecration to God, it should be hallowed by temperance, soberness, and chastity. And more than this. It is not only to be the subject of restraint, but to be made to minister actively in the Service of God. Does it do this in each one of us? Do the feet carry us on errands of mercy, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction? Do the hands engage willingly in profitable labour, and having by that labour gained more than suffices for our own wants, are they opened freely in the relief of distress? Are the eyes sanctified by being fixed on the glorious works of God, while the mind takes occasion to glorify the Creator? Or, if we are far from landscape and scenery, are they employed in reading the Law of the Lord, and in scanning with thoughtful prayer His wonderful testimonies? Are the ears opened to the glorious harmony of praise, which Nature in her every district is sending up to the Throne of God,—opened to holy and wise counsels, closed against flattery and sinful enticement? Do we invoke God's watch over our mouth, and His custody of the door of our lips, and do we also watch that whatsoever passes out of that door may be pure and sincere at all events, and (as much as possible) useful and edifying?

Lord, whose feet carried Thee swiftly to the house of mourning, whose hands gave health to the infirm, and blessing to the little children, whose eyes, as Thou stoodest at the sepulchre, were suffused with tears, whose ears were pierced with revilings for our sakes, in whose mouth was no guile, and whose lips were full of grace; let us not be backward to yield to Thee the service of all our members, and do Thou preserve them blameless

unto that day, when Thou shalt change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto Thy glorious Body, according to the working whereby Thou art able to subdue all things unto Thyself.

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## LECTURE IV.

OF THE FIRST PART OF THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION.

“*This do in remembrance of Me.*”—LUKE xxii. 19.

WE have now reached the culminating point of the whole Rite. The Consecration and Administration of the Elements may be called the nucleus of the Ordinance, round which grow up and gather the various forms of Devotion through which we have passed, and are to pass. And as the seed contains the germ of the whole plant, so this central part of the Office is a little miniature, or short draught of the whole. All that is to be known about the Lord's Supper is given us here in brief and abridgment.

Before making the actual celebration of the Death of Christ, the minister produces his warrant for making it. This is done in the first part of the Prayer of Consecration, upon which alone we shall at present have time to comment: “All glory be to Thee, Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, for that Thou of Thy tender mercy didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our Redemption; Who made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction,

for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in His holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that His precious Death, until His coming again." In the second chapter of his Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul speaks slightly of will-worship. By will-worship is meant the paying homage to Almighty God after a fashion devised by ourselves, and not dictated by His Word. It is the worshipping Him according to the leanings of our own will, not according to the intimations which He has been pleased to make to us of His. Because will-worship is so offensive to God, and because we may not presume without sin to devise other methods for His service than He has Himself appointed, therefore we are careful, in all our solemn acts of Religion, to quote (if I may say so) the authority on which we proceed. Hence in the Absolution of the daily Morning and Evening Prayer, the function is not fulfilled without first reciting the authority on which it is exercised, and its conformity with the revealed mind of God: "Almighty God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . who hath given power, and commandment to His Ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent," &c., &c. And in the Ministration of Baptism, you will find the Prayer for the sanctification of the water entirely analogous to that before us. For first there is recited the act, and then the command of Christ, by which the minister's function is warranted. "Almighty, everliving God, whose most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, *did shed out of His most precious side both water and blood; and gave commandment to his disciples that they should go teach all nations and baptize them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"—On a



principle precisely similar, when we are about to celebrate the higher Sacrament, we recite the Act of Christ on which it is founded, and the Precept of Christ by which it is warranted. The act is this, that "Christ made upon the cross a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." The Precept is this, that "Christ did institute, and in His Holy Gospel command us to continue a perpetual memory of that His Precious Death."—Great must have been the satisfaction of the pious Israelite in thinking that the worship of the Tabernacle had been expressly prescribed by God, and that a model of all its furniture had been shown to Moses in the Mount. And our satisfaction may reasonably be great in reflecting that this holy ordinance is a memorial designed, not by man, but by the Lord Himself; by one who knows our nature and our wants better than we ourselves know them; and who took care, before He left us, to furnish us richly with all those means of Grace, which we should need as channels of communication with Him during the time of His absence. It would not have been otherwise than pious and devout, if the Lord had left behind no memorial of His Death, to appoint and observe some season for calling it specially to mind, and reviving our impressions in connexion with it. But upon such an observance we could not have hoped for any special Blessing, although the state of mind from which it took its rise would doubtless have been acceptable to God. As matters stand now, may we not most surely expect that the special Grace and Presence of Our Lord will accompany our observance of His own Institution, if only our state of mind be in keeping with the occasion?—And again, if will-worship be offensive to



God, how must He resent any interference even with the details of the Ordinances, which He has prescribed for our edification! If Christ has said, "Drink ye *all* of this," how offensive, what an insult to His authority must it be to say that none but the officiating Priest shall drink of it, under the sorry pretext that desecration is thereby hazarded by spilling some particle of the wine! One form of will-worship is, no doubt, to invent something where God has prescribed nothing. But surely it is another and more culpable form to alter and abrogate, where God has expressly prescribed.

Our Liturgy is very exhaustive (though very brief) in its treatment of subjects; and therefore the warrant for the celebration of the Holy Supper is not barely stated in the passage before us; on the contrary, the Ordinance is carried up to its source, and down to the term prescribed for it. As a warrant for thus commemorating the Lord's Death, we have His own institution and command. What is the nature of the Death thus commemorated? What is the source and origin of it? For how long is the commemoration appointed to last? All these questions are summarily, but completely, answered in the section of the Prayer now before us. The Death of Christ is a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." It had its origin in the "tender mercy" of God, who gave His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. It is to be commemorated in this manner, until the second Advent of the Saviour supersedes the necessity for it,—“till He come.”

1. The Death of Christ is declared to be a sufficient sacrifice for sinners; a perfect oblation on His part (an oblation in which was no flaw nor blemish); and a full

satisfaction to God. The sinner requires something,—a sacrifice. Christ presents something,—an oblation. God demands something,—a satisfaction. See how exact the language is, and how it appears to have been written for the purpose of rebutting, and putting out of court the evasions of modern Rationalism. Observe that the aspect of Our Lord's Death as an example, because it was not the leading or main feature of it, is dropped altogether, does not present itself at all upon the field of view. Most true it is (and most precious truth) that Our Blessed Lord was an example in His death, as well as in His life; most true also (conversely) that all His sufferings, and all His obedience, and not his death only, were atoning; but still the great glory, and virtue, and efficacy of His Death, the distinctive feature of it, that which no other death of human being ever had in common with it, is its sacrificial and propitiatory character. It is not as an example that we now commemorate His death, but as the ransom of our souls.

Again, observe how the language is so constructed as not to allow any evasion of the doctrine, that the Holiness, Justice, and Truth of God demanded this Death. It was not only a sacrifice, intrinsically noble and generous in the highest degree; it was not only a pure and acceptable oblation; but a satisfaction also. If so, there must be a party to be satisfied; and this party can be none other than God: there must be something analogous to a debt on our part, the creditor being God, and the Person who has made full payment or satisfaction Christ. This is the primitive, old, and ordinary view of the Atonement; and although, no doubt, there are many deep mysteries in the transaction which the human reason can never solve, I cannot but think that the

grounds usually assigned for the necessity of Our Lord's Death were very well established, till a perverse ingenuity, and a culpable inquisitiveness, which will acquiesce in no mystery, came and disturbed them, and threw them all into confusion. If God is the moral Governor and Judge of the World (as who can doubt that He is?) surely He is bound to make His Law respected. And this obligation creates a real difficulty as to the pardon of a transgressor, however strongly the tender mercy of God might urge Him to such pardon. Persons entrusted with the administration of justice in an earthly community know what it is to long to spare a criminal, but to be effectually checked by the question rising up before them and haunting them, "*Can I spare, consistently, not only with the good of the community, but with justice and right?*" Conceive the Lawgiver and the Law both perfect (as in God's case they are), and the hindrance to the showing mercy is immensely aggravated.

Now that a duly-constituted Representative of our Race (being also a Divine Person) should have succeeded in removing this hindrance, by substituting Himself in the place of sinners, and receiving the pains and penalties of sin upon His own head, in such a manner as that all who are truly joined to Him have undergone the penalty, and paid the debt, in His sufferings,—this is indeed far above Reason; but surely there is nothing whatsoever in it contrary to, or out of conformity with, Reason. The doctrine runs parallel with Reason so far as our faculties enable us to pursue the subject; but like all the doctrines of Revelation it is found, when followed out, to abut upon mystery; and he who is determined, not merely to get a glimpse into its reasonableness, but to reduce it, in all its parts, within the compass of his

understanding, resembles a man who should undertake to trace a telegraphic wire along its whole course : for a while it runs parallel to the earth, and he has no difficulty in reaching it ; but ere long it takes a dip into the ocean, or stretches across a ravine, where he can neither follow it, nor say at what point it issues.

Observe, also, how carefully the Roman doctrine of the repetition of the Sacrifice of the Cross is fenced off by the allusion made in the words, “ His *One* oblation of Himself *once* offered,” to St. Paul’s assertion in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “ This man, after He had offered one Sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God.” “ By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” To offer another Sacrifice for sin, or to offer this a second time, is impossible ; the words of Inspiration exclude for ever the impious pretensions of the Roman Priesthood. “ There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” All that the Church on earth can do is to prolong through all time in the ears of God and man, the echoes of the One Sacrifice once offered on Calvary. The image, I believe, is an accurate one, and conveys the truth on this great subject as far as figurative language can do so. A sound is not really repeated, it is not made a second time, when the echoes of it are caught up by neighbouring rocks and hill, and it is reverberated from peak to peak. Reverberation is not repetition, though it may be called so in a loose and popular way. And the perpetual memory of the Sacrifice of Calvary in the Sacrament of the Eucharist is indeed a reverberation, but in no sense a repetition, of the Sacrifice of the Cross. The Sacrifice was fully accomplished, when Our Lord cried with His latest breath, “ It is finished.” All that remains is that Christ



should plead it for us in Heaven above, that the Church (which is His Body) should plead it on earth below. This pleading takes place most emphatically, and under the especial sanction of a Divine Ordinance, in the Lord's Supper, when Jesus Christ is evidently set forth before our eyes crucified amongst us

2. But again. This introduction of the Prayer of Consecration carries us up to the source of the Sacrifice of Christ, and so rebuts another serious error, which (as is always found to be the case) has given rise to error in another direction. The heresies of Rationalism on the subject of the Atonement are due in great part, if not entirely, to the frightful and repulsive picture of God the Father, which used to be drawn by those who professed to represent the true Evangelical scheme. It was too often insinuated in the works and sermons of these divines, that the First Person of the Blessed Trinity wore always a frown towards mankind; was, in fact, a stern tyrant, with no other aspect towards transgressors than that of unmitigated severity. It was the fashion, and it became (strange to say) the orthodox Shibboleth, to connect the thought of grace, mercy, and peace, exclusively with the Second Person, and to see in the character of the First nothing but judgment and vengeance. No heresy can well be more unscriptural in its theory, or more mischievous in its practical effects. The Love of God is the source of all virtue; and what soul can be persuaded to love God, and to render to Him the homage of affectionate obedience, so long as it sees in Him no fatherly yearning over the fallen, no bowels of mercies;—nothing but a stern insisting upon duty, and a prompt readiness to avenge all disobedience? The Scriptures represent the Sacrifice of Christ not only as essential to



satisfy God's demands, but as itself flowing from the tender mercy and love of God. Delightful and most consolatory thought! The Sacrifice is as valuable for what it proves, as for what it effects. It shows clearly that there exists in God's boundless Love, which scrupled not at the only gift which could be a sacrifice on God's part, the gift of His Son. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It wrings God's fatherly heart with pain, when a sinner perishes. Rather than that such a thing should be, He gives, He has given, His Son, parted with Him for a time in some mysterious manner, that He might bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. Can there be by possibility a greater encouragement to prayer, to penitence, to faith, to affection, to every gracious temper, and every spiritual exercise? If it had not been for God's Love, there would have been no sacrifice for sin. The Love of God is the source, the sacrifice is the stream. The Love of God is the root, the sacrifice is the tree. The Love of God is the foundation, the sacrifice is the superstructure. Our Church, therefore, in setting forth the Sacrifice, thinks that it cannot be fully and fairly represented except in this aspect, as evidencing the boundless compassion for man, which finds place in God's fatherly heart. So when the Sacrifice is to be celebrated, and the memorial of it solemnly made (according to the Lord's appointment) with bread and wine, the first thing to be done is to travel up to the source of this inestimable benefit, and to rehearse and commemorate the tender love, which so longed for our recovery as not to keep back from us the most precious thing it had; and the rehearsal is made after this man-

ner: "Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who of *Thy tender mercy* didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our Redemption."

Is it not marvellous how our formularies, if examined and weighed, are found to fence off error at every point of the charmed circle of Truth, at which error can possibly insinuate itself?

3. But, again; as this introductory clause of the Prayer carries us up to the source of the Sacrifice of Christ, so it carries us down to the period when that Sacrifice shall no longer need to be pleaded, because the Mediatorial Kingdom will then have ceased, and the sin which still remains in the universe will not admit of expiation and atonement. The reverberation of the Sacrifice of Calvary is to sound along the whole course of time, to be made in the ears of generations yet unborn, and to carry down to a distant posterity the accents of the Love of God and the Grace of Christ. But there must be, at the time decreed in the divine counsels, a last generation. Time itself must have an end; its great clock must strike the world's last hour, and then run down. And this will be at the second coming of Our Lord to this planet, which the Church should live in constant expectation of and preparation for. On His arrival, all showing forth of His death shall cease, as it is written: "Ye do show forth the Lord's death *till He come.*" And the rationale of this cessation it is not difficult to trace. In the first place, the memorial of an absent friend is naturally superseded upon his return. We do not need pictures, or rings, or tokens of affection, to remind us of those who are constantly by our sides in the daily intercourse of life; we say naturally enough, "I possess himself; I do not need his picture." Now

so far as the Lord's Supper is a memorial, designed to affect our minds with a lively remembrance of all He did and suffered for us, the necessity for it must of course be superseded by His return. When we have the Bridegroom of our souls amongst us again, we shall not need any longer the picture, the token which He left behind. When we look with our own eyes upon the marks of the nails in His hands and feet, and on the spear-wound in His side, what need of the broken bread and outpoured wine to remind us of those precious stigmata?

But we have already intimated more than once, that the Eucharist has several higher aspects than that of a memorial, that it is far more than merely a means of affecting our own minds by a sensible representation of Christ's death. Just as prayer is not only valuable for its efficacy in calming the spirit, and soothing the troubled heart, not only valuable as a conduit whereby the grace of God is conveyed into our souls, but also is to be regarded as an act of homage, and thus has an aspect altogether independent of human wants and human infirmities; so the Holy Communion is not only valuable for its effects upon our mind, but has also a mysterious aspect towards God, and sounds in His ears as in the ears of man, the echo of His Son's One Sacrifice. And in this aspect of it also it will cease, when the Lord comes. For sin will then be abolished out of the heart of God's people; so that they will need no longer the pleading of any sacrifice in expiation of it. And as regards the sin of the impenitent, it will be (as I have said) stereotyped in the transgressor; and the benefits of the Sacrifice having been by them deliberately refused, there will no longer remain for them any prospect of reconciliation. The Eucharist is bound up in the system of mediation

between God and man, which is negotiated by the Sacrifice of Christ; and when that system falls to the ground, the Eucharist must of necessity fall with it.

In the clause which we have now considered, our Liturgy seems to place us at a point of view high above the course of Time, at which we may contemplate human history at its beginning and its close, and see the origin and the issue of the great scheme of Salvation. In the centre of human history is planted the Cross, the alone meritorious cause of every blessing which has reached our race. But this Cross we see to have been first devised in the counsels of Eternity,—devised, long ages before it was erected, by the tender mercy of Our Heavenly Father. This accursed (and yet blessed) Tree is seen bearing its beautiful fruits in the experience of man along the course of ages, until the number of the elect is accomplished, and the last saved soul is gathered into the garner of God. Meanwhile Hope and Memory, both of them under the sanction of Divine Ordinances, lead up to this central point, the Cross, and find life and vigour there. Hope is nourished by the sacrifices of the Jewish ritual, ordained of God to foreshadow the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction which Christ made upon the Tree. Memory is nourished by the Sacraments of the Gospel, ordained to represent after the fact the very event, which the sacrifices had before represented more obscurely.

Reader, is this Death our one point of sight, as it is God's? Do we live in it in any true sense; derive from it strength against temptation, energy for renewed efforts, hope in difficulties, comfort in troubles? Is it a real spring of moral action within us, the strongest in-



centive to holiness, the most effectual dissuasive from sin? O God, make us to know the fellowship of Thy Son's sufferings, to feel the power of His death, mortifying in us all our evil and corrupt affections, and crucifying us to the world and to sin; so that, when He shall appear, we, who have been already planted together with Him in the likeness of His death, may be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

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## LECTURE V.

### OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS, AND THE OBLATION.

“For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and Prayer.”—1 TIM. iv. 4, 5.

THE Body of the Prayer of Consecration consists of three members. First: the history of the Institution is recited; and the very actions employed by Our Lord on the occasion are repeated in the course of this recital, the vessels containing either element being taken into the hands of the Priest, the Bread being broken by him, and, finally, his hand being laid upon the Bread and Cup, as a sign that they are now blessed and hallowed. Secondly: with the Bread and Wine, thus invested with a new significance, a solemn Memorial of the Death of Christ is made before God. The elements are offered to Him in the first instance (and this is called *the oblation*) before we receive them back from Him, blessed and sanctified to the highest spiritual use. And this oblation we con-



ceive to be (if not an essential, yet) a very beautiful and significant part of the great Ritual. We conceive that it brings out in high relief this feature of the Holy Sacrament, that it is a memorial of the Sacrifice of Christ *made in the ears of God, no less than in those of the Church.* We thus plead *in act* before Him what we plead *verbally*, when we say at the end of each Prayer, “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The Intercession of Christ above keeps alive in Heaven the memory of His Sacrifice; and the making of this memorial upon Earth is a note which vibrates in unison with that Intercession. True it is, of course, that to speak of recalling the past to God’s memory is to use language in which He is accommodated to our understandings; but as He Himself condescends to use such language in Holy Scripture, it is our wisdom to accept it with simplicity, as conveying to us the most accurate notions of the Truth which we are capable of receiving. Thirdly: when we are about to receive the elements back from God, we make an *Invocation* over them (a form used in the earliest times by the whole of the Eastern, and a great part of the Western Church), praying Him to “bless and sanctify with His Word and Holy Spirit these His “gifts and creatures of Bread and Wine,” so that they may be the means of conveying to us the inward spiritual grace of the Sacrament, to the strengthening and refreshing of our souls; “that we, receiving them according to Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ’s Holy institution, in remembrance of His Death and Passion, may be partakers of His most Blessed Body and Blood.”

Now both the recital of the words of Institution, and a Prayer of this general purport, have, from the earliest ages of the Church’s History, been considered essential

to a valid consecration. The Roman Church in this, as in so many other points, deviates from Primitive Antiquity, maintaining that Consecration is effected by a mere repetition of the words, "This is My Body," "This is My Blood." And as it is not unfrequently the case that extremes meet, so we shall find here that sundry Protestant sects, who have gone as far as possible from Rome both in doctrine and discipline, hold the recital of the words of Institution to be the only requisite. Our Church holds closer both to primitive practice, and to the example of Our Lord. She uses a "*Prayer of Consecration*," implying surely by the very title that Prayer is essential; and after reciting the history and words of the Institution, invokes the Holy Spirit, and addresses to our Heavenly Father a fervent petition for the great blessing of the Ordinance. St. Paul says, in reference to our ordinary reception of food, that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God" (that is, by some passage of Holy Scripture introduced into the Grace before Meat) "and prayer." And our Church holds, as the early Church did, that this Heavenly Food must be sanctified in the same manner, not only by reciting from the Scriptures the very words of Institution, but also by *thanksgiving* for God's tender mercy, and Christ's all-sufficient Sacrifice, and by *prayer*, that this Ordinance, which echoes on the Sacrifice to the end of Time, may be an effectual instrument of communicating the virtue of it to our souls. And a close study of Our Lord's practice in instituting the Holy Supper leads us to the same conclusion. The Evangelists expressly say that He gave thanks, before He used the words, "This is My Body," "This is My Blood of the

New Testament,"—addressing Himself to God over the Bread and over the Cup in the first instance, before He gave them to the disciples as His Body and Blood.

The sum and substance of what has been said is, that an address to God, in the form of Prayer and Thanksgiving, has from the earliest times been regarded, and justly regarded, as essential to Consecration.

To some, no doubt, the point will seem a very unimportant one, more especially if they are unfamiliar with the history of Liturgical controversy. But under questions which present to an ordinary mind the appearance of being mere subtleties,—not worth the raising, and certainly not worth the controverting,—there occasionally lie hid great principles, which are at issue; and we believe that it is so in the present instance. The whole history of the Lord's Supper, culminating as it does in the error of Transubstantiation, shows a sad tendency in the human mind to localize and materialize the blessing of the Ordinance,—I mean by localizing and materializing the blessing, the placing it entirely in the outward visible sign, the imagining some mysterious charm,—a virtue half-physical, half-spiritual,—to reside in the crumbs of Bread, and in the drops of Wine. The Lutheran doctrine of Consubstantiation is quite as open to this charge as the bolder and more unreasonable error of the Church of Rome. And there can be no doubt that many members of our own Communion, in the views they take of the subject, attach the blessing far too little to the Ordinance itself, and far too exclusively to the sensible, material vehicle of the Ordinance. The mysterious operation upon the Bread and Wine, by which they are sanctified for their high significance and office, engrosses in their minds the whole field of view;

and the operations of and upon the human spirit, which the Ordinance is designed to call forth and develope, go for nothing in their estimate. The natural superstitiousness of the human heart (for it is most superstitious), gathers round the material and local, and the mental and the moral are thrown into the background. One can fancy a similar debasement of idea in connexion with the Person of Our Blessed Lord. It was, of course, a most exalted privilege to the Apostles, and the source of great blessings to the inhabitants of the Holy Land, among whom He went about doing good, to have Our Lord with them, and in the midst of them. His Sacred Body was the source of natural health to thousands of poor patients who touched it, and His teaching was the source of spiritual health to those who listened to it. But supposing that in those days some of His disciples had attached to the mere Body of Our Lord, independently of any action of mind on the part of those who heard Him and applied to Him, the blessings of His Presence in the world. Supposing they had heeded scarcely at all the gracious words which fell from His lips, and had imagined that the mere fact of His neighbourhood in the body would prove a sort of talisman of health to the whole district in which He sojourned. Would He not have most seriously reproved such notions? Did He not virtually and implicitly reprove them, when He required faith from all patients as the one condition of their cure, that is, an operative persuasion of the mind on their part that He was able and willing to relieve them? In no case does Christ heal without this preliminary condition; wherever persons apply to Him for healing, the application itself of course implies the persuasion on their part; but never is the healing granted as the mere result of material con-



tact with His Person. Faith and Prayer were the conductors, without which the virtue that was in Him could not reach the bodies of the suffering; an awakened mind and a docile heart were the conductors, without which the spiritual blessings of His Divine Ministry were not, and could not be realized. Now this illustrates very well the caution we are now attempting to give in reference to the elements in the Supper of the Lord. We need not deny, rather we would clearly and strongly affirm, that they are not mere symbols, but stand in some real, though mysterious relation to the blessing of the Ordinance. Yet we say that the blessing is not to be materialized, or supposed to reside in the elements, after the manner of a charm. And we find a protest to this effect in the true doctrine of the Consecration of the Elements. The mere recital of the formulary, the mere contact of the hands, is not sufficient by itself,—has never in the best and purest times been held sufficient,—to that Consecration. They are sanctified by the Prayer and Thanksgiving which accompanies their Consecration,—the offering of which implies Faith, the only avenue by which any blessing can reach the human soul. When we lift up our hearts to God over a common meal, in acknowledgment of His Bounty in spreading our board with daily food convenient for us, by this action of the mind we sanctify His good gifts to our use. And on a similar principle, when over the oblation of Bread and Wine, destined to become the Symbols of the Body and Blood of Christ, we raise up all our thoughts, desires, and affections to God, and implore Him to make us partakers thereby of the benefits of the Great Sacrifice, reciting over them at the same time the history of Christ's Institution,—this is the Consecration of the



Elements, whereby they are sanctified to that high and holy use which they fulfil towards us. How important, then, at this culminating period of the rite, is a spirit of fervent, earnest, believing Prayer, offered with all our heart, and soul, and strength! And in order to the due maintenance of this spirit, we must not only stir up ourselves to pray, chiding our own hearts for their indifference and insensibility, and, if I may so say, following hard after God, but also must study beforehand the words appointed for our use, so that we may pray with the understanding, as well as with the spirit.

II. But we must now say a word upon the earlier part of the Consecration, which is admitted on all hands to be essential;—and this is the recital of the history of the Institution, comprising our Lord's words and actions on that occasion. The creatures of God (says St. Paul) “are sanctified,” and made fit for man's use, “by the Word of God and Prayer,”—not by Prayer only, but by the Word of God and Prayer. I have already intimated that by the word of God is here meant, in all probability, some appropriate passage of Holy Writ woven into the Grace or Prayer of Thanksgiving, as for example the following: “The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand and fillest all things living with plenteousness.” Over this Heavenly Food, then, in accordance with the Apostolic precept for the sanctification of our ordinary meals, are recited the words by which Christ first instituted the Supper,—a fragment this, and a most precious fragment, of the true Word of God. Very much as in the Solemnization of Marriage the words are rehearsed by which He engrafted that primitive Ordinance into His new Law: “What therefore

God hath joined together, let no man put asunder ;” so here also the rehearsal of His words of Institution, “ This is my Body, which is given for you ;” “ This is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you,” accomplish and render perfect the great Solemnity.

One word remains to be said respecting the actions which are used during the rehearsal of the words of Institution. These also are founded on the example of our Lord, Who took the Bread and Cup into His Hand, and broke the Bread, before giving it to His disciples. It is observable that, in prescribing these actions, our Ritual is more minute and particular than that of the mediæval Church or of the Church of Rome. With regard to the breaking of the Bread, the latter has deviated remarkably from the primitive Institution, and from the Scriptural significance of the action, prescribing only the breaking of a single wafer into three parts, two of which parts are consumed by the Priest, and the third dropped into the wine,—none of them given to the people. Now it is to be remembered that the breaking of the bread was, in the time of the Apostles, reckoned so characteristic a feature of this Sacrament, that in the New Testament it goes under the Name of “ the breaking of bread ;” and that this breaking was for the purpose, not only of signifying the Death of Christ, but also of distribution among the communicants, is abundantly clear from the words of St. Paul : “ For we being many are one bread ” (one cake or loaf), “ and one body ; for we are all partakers of that one loaf.” In other words, the sacred Loaf, which represents and conveys the Body of Christ, is one ; and a portion of it, after it has been broken, passes into each communicant, who thereupon is made one with the Body of Christ or Christian Society.

If the Bread be not really broken and distributed, we lose altogether the significance of our having fellowship one with another in this Sacrament, in the one Body of Christ. See how the trifling with the little details of a Divine Institution may entirely obscure the great spiritual lessons, which are to be drawn from it, and obliterate one of its leading features. For that the Lord's Supper is a Sacrament not only of Christ's Death, but of the fellowship which in Him we have one with another, is certainly one of its most interesting and important aspects. One loaf has been broken among all of us,—partaken of by all,—and has been the means, if faithfully partaken of, of incorporating us into the One Body of Christ. What circumstance can teach us more forcibly how utterly out of harmony we are with the spirit of the Ordinance, if there rankle at the bottom of our hearts a single particle of ill-will, or hostility towards any of our brethren? What can teach us more forcibly that a real participation of the Body and Blood of Christ will be attended with an increase of love to our brethren, with a greater forbearance towards their infirmities, and a more tender and unselfish consideration for their feelings and prejudices? And indeed by considering how far we have advanced in brotherly kindness and charity, we may test not only our growth in grace generally, but also the amount of profit which we have derived from this blessed Sacrament. It is a very practical and intelligible test; and one which gives us perhaps fewer openings than any other to deceive ourselves. We may be quite sure that Divine Love is not really strengthened and matured within us, unless brotherly love has made a corresponding growth. For these are two twins, which have a living ligament passing from the heart of the one

to that of the other,—a ligament which gives them a sympathy, so that the health or decline of the one is instantly felt by the other. “He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?”

We must now trace the leading ideas brought before the mind in the conclusion of this Prayer, and their connexion with the earlier part of it. We have made the memorial of the Sacrifice of Christ before God; and have petitioned that by a due participation of this Ordinance we may reap all the benefits of His Sacrifice. What can be more appropriate than that we should be reminded that the Sacrifice of Christ, if really embraced by us, will not stand alone; that we too, having been washed in His Blood, and made kings and priests to God and His Father, must have, as priests, “somewhat to offer,” based upon the ground of His perfect and alone meritorious Sacrifice? Accordingly, this “somewhat” here comes into view. It is, first, praise and thanksgiving, drawn forth from the heart and lips by the sense of God’s pardoning love. “We earnestly desire Thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.” But praise is not the only offering required of us. In every fresh act of Holy Communion there is a renewal of our Baptismal Covenant with God. And this Covenant is all summed up in one word, “self-sacrifice.” We were in Baptism solemnly consecrated to God, both in body and soul. We repeat that self-consecration in the Holy Communion. And these are the words in which we repeat it: “Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto Thee.” As our Blessed Lord, after insti-



tuting the Holy Supper, sanctified or consecrated Himself (see John xvii. 19) to do God's will on the Cross, and to "make a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world;" so we also, in making the memorial of His Death, yield ourselves solemnly unto God "as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." And the thought should follow us into our daily life, that we have put ourselves, and all that we have, at God's disposal, our hands to do His business, our feet to walk on His errands, our eyes to study His works, our ears to listen to His Word, our mouths to speak His praise, our minds to apprehend His Glory, our hearts to love His Perfections.



## LECTURE VI.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?"—1 Cor. x. 16.

THE history of the Apostolic Church, as given in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles, may be said to be a model and miniature of all that was to come after in Ecclesiastical History. In the Apostles and their associates we find patterns of the different characters and endowments of Christians down to the end of time; after ages only offering feebler repetitions of what those holy men were. In St. John, the devout and meditative Christian; in St. Paul, the extensively active and in-



fluent Christian ; in St. Peter, the enthusiastic Christian, with strong will and abilities for administration ; in Barnabas, the quiet and gentle Christian, whose voice soothes the mourner ; in Apollos, the eloquent teacher, who kindles with his lofty theme ; in Timotheus, the disciple who has imbibed the principles of true religion from a mother's precepts, combined with a mother's prayers,—are respectively exemplified. And as it is with characters, so it is with heresies, contradictions, controversies, and movements in the Church. A little model and miniature of all these movements (very perfect and exact as models and miniatures are) is to be found in the primitive Church, while yet it was under inspired government. There was a Rationalistic party in the Sadducees. And there was a Romanizing party,—Romanizing, I mean, in tendency and spirit, before the Church of Rome was ever heard of,—among the Pharisees. There was a strong Antinomian party, denounced and censured by St. James. There was a strong party who stood up for justification by human merit, demolished a thousand times over by St. Paul, so that one would think (although the event has not justified the anticipation) that they never could have held up their heads again. There was a philosophical party called Gnostics, who adulterated the faith by spurious admixtures of Rabbinical and Oriental speculations, against whom St. John, the great speculative divine of Inspiration, directed all his strength. And, finally, there was in those days the Free-grace and Free-will controversy (called in these modern times Calvinistic and Arminian), which the holy Apostles left without any logical adjustment, making statements which looked in both directions ; so that the result of all Biblical research on that

moot point has been well and tersely summed up thus :  
"Calvinists and Arminians are both right and both wrong ; they are right in what they assert, and wrong in what they deny."

And was there any controversy on the subject of the Eucharist in the time of the Apostles, as there has been much since? No formal controversy on this great subject even showed its head,—much less came to a crisis, till the eighth century of the Christian Era. But still there were the elements of Eucharist controversy in the Apostolic Church, though they were not for a long time to receive their full development. Modern views on the subject err either in excess or defect ; the Lord's Supper is either unduly exalted (which is the tendency of all Roman and Romanizing Theology), or unduly depreciated (which is the error of the Protestant sects). Now it is clear that the last of these errors found itself represented in the Corinthian Church in the time of St. Paul. Their flagrant desecration of the Ordinance could not possibly have consisted with any high view of it. Those who snatched their own portion of the common Supper, before the communicants had fully assembled, and the entertainment had been formally opened, could not have regarded with much reverence the sacred Institution, which was to form part of that supper. They looked upon it too familiarly (though one would think the very solemn words of Institution would have acted as a sufficient safeguard against desecration) ; the Ordinance had dropped in their estimation to the level of a very common thing. Accordingly, St. Paul sets himself to put it on a higher level in their minds, that it might be out of reach of their desecration. For before he

enters on their abuse of it in the eleventh Chapter, he expounds, in another connexion, the nature and dignity of the Sacrament in the tenth: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?" And still in the eleventh Chapter he harps on the dignity of the Ordinance; he speaks of their eating and drinking unworthily, in consequence of their not discerning the Lord's Body, i. e. not appreciating the mystery of it, not distinguishing between it and a common meal. And the guilt incurred by an irreverent and indiscriminating reception is painted by him in these frightfully strong colours: "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord." And he points out that this guilt would be, and in their case had been, followed by certain temporal judgments of God upon the offenders, sickness and death, which judgments, he says, were corrective, and designed to bring the Corinthian Church to a right mind. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh" (the word "damnation" in our Authorized Version, which has given rise to so much false alarm, is well known by all scholars to be a thoroughly inaccurate rendering) "a judgment unto himself." The kind of judgment is immediately explained in the verse next following: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (i. e. sleep in death). And the merciful design of the judgment (which was in order to avert eternal condemnation) is subjoined: "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned"

(here the word “condemned” is perfectly right) “with the world.”

Now this manner of writing on the part of St. Paul, —the Apostle, generally speaking, not so much of Ordinance as of Faith,—gave the first impulse to a reaction in the minds of Christians on the subject of the Lord’s Supper. His Apostolic word had disentangled the Eucharist from the Supper with which it was once associated, and placed it in a shrine of its own; had declared its true nature as a participation of the Body and Blood of Christ; and had pointed out the sad consequences of desecrating it. From that time forth, there arose in the Church a strong tendency to exalt the Eucharist, which, like most strong tendencies, became, as time went on, grossly exaggerated, and resulted at length in what may be rightly called the deification of the Ordinance. Thus in the Apostolic Church we find a party, which irreverently derogated from the dignity of the Lord’s Supper; and we also find, in St. Paul’s censure of this party, the origin of the tendency which resulted in an undue exaltation of it. For indeed, in that Apostolic Church, as I have said, were the seeds of all future Ecclesiastical History.

It will be well, in endeavouring to expound the Scriptural and Church of England doctrine of the Eucharist, to state briefly and clearly the two extreme views (you may call them, for the sake of a name, the Rationalizing and Romanizing views) between which the truth lies. And may God help me, by the light of His Spirit, to a clear exposition, and you to a clear understanding of this matter, for His Son’s sake!

1. What may be called the Rationalizing view of the Lord’s Supper acknowledges no mystery in the transac-



tion. It is all, according to this view, as plain as day. Just as a dying father gathers his children round his deathbed, and gives them each his blessing, and puts into the hand of each some little token by which, when he is gone, they may call him to mind, so, it is said, the Everlasting Father, when on the eve of leaving those whom He so lovingly called His "little children," instituted a certain rite for their observance, which rite was purely and merely commemorative, answered (and was designed to answer) no other purpose towards them than that of reminding them in a lively manner, through the senses, of the blessed Body, which had been broken, and the precious Blood, which had been spilled for them. No one denies, you will observe, that this commemoration is one great object of the Holy Communion. But the divines whose views we are now representing, maintain this to have been its *exclusive* object, and that this account of the Ordinance exhausts the subject. With regard to the words of Institution: "This is my Body;" "This is my Blood;" it is maintained that they are to be taken figuratively: "This Bread is a *figure* of my Body," "This Wine is a *figure* of my Blood;" and instances are adduced from the Scriptures, where the substantive verb "*is*" has a similar meaning to that which is here imposed upon it; as for example, "The seven good kine *are* seven years" (that is, represent, or stand for, seven years); "The seed *is* the word of God;" "The harvest *is* the end of the world" (meaning that the seed and the harvest, in the parables where they occur, represent, respectively, the Word of God and the end of the world); and so forth.

Now, perhaps, had it not been for the Apostle Paul, we might think this view capable of a tolerable reconcil-



iation with Holy Scripture. He, however, was appointed by God to bring out more clearly, and define more exactly, the words of Institution, which his Divine Master had employed. And be it observed that St. Paul's style of writing is not imaginative or rhetorical, but logical, closely argued, and, generally speaking, as far removed as possible from the figurative. Thus he paraphrases (and in paraphrasing points out the true force of) the words, in which the Ordinance had been instituted. "The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion" (mutual or reciprocal participation) "of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?"

He does not say, "Is it not a figure or representation of the Blood and Body of Christ" (though this would have been perfectly intelligible and perfectly true); his words go far beyond this in strength and mysteriousness; he says, "Is it not *a communication of, a means of participating in*, the Body and Blood of Christ?" Now what is the utmost you could say with truth of the miniature of a deceased parent? You might say, no doubt, "This miniature reminds me of my dear father and mother, and brings back especially to my mind that painful hour when they forsook me, having first committed me to His care, who is the Protector of orphans." But no man, speaking prose and sober sense, could possibly say of such a miniature: "My looking on this miniature is a means, whereby I hold intercourse with the spirit of my departed parent in Paradise." It is perhaps just conceivable that in very highflown and extravagant poetry some such idea might be insinuated; but the Epistle to the Corinthians is not poetry; and even if it were, where the Holy Ghost is the speaker,

and the faith of the Catholic Church on the most important Ordinance of Religion is the thing to be determined by His verdict, His speech will surely be in all truth, and soberness, and exactitude.

Thus the view that the Eucharistic Rite is simply commemorative, and the Consecrated Elements merely figures, is excluded at once and for ever by the plain language of the Apostle Paul.

And our Church faithfully and devoutly echoes his language, telling us in the Twenty-eighth Article, that "the Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise, the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ."

2. We now come to the Romanizing view of the Eucharist, which culminates, or finds its extreme form, in the dogma called "Transubstantiation." I will represent, as shortly and plainly as I can, what well-instructed Romanists mean by that dogma, observing, first, that their views on this, and other points of Theology, are often much misapprehended and misrepresented by Protestants.

Transubstantiation, as our Twenty-eighth Article well defines it, means the "change of *the substance* of Bread and Wine in the Supper of the Lord." Observe: the change of the *substance*, not the change of the *phenomena*. There is one great change of natural substance, recorded in the Scriptures of truth, which may help us to a clear understanding of the matter in hand. At the wedding

of Cana in Galilee, our Lord changed water into wine,—into wine of a quality and flavour superior to any which the guests had yet partaken of. Now if we were to ask a Romanist whether the change effected in the elements by the Priest's consecration of them is of the same kind as the change which passed upon the water in the six waterpots of stone at Cana, he would say, because in truth he could say nothing else, “Not exactly. I believe that the transformation wrought by the Priest is as great a miracle as that wrought by Our Lord on the occasion you refer to, but *not as capable of being appreciated by the senses*. The water at Cana, when changed into wine, had the taste and colour of wine. Whereas the bread and wine after consecration, though changed (as I believe) into the literal Body and Blood of Christ, still retain the taste and colour of Bread and Wine. It is the substance which I believe to be changed, not the phenomena which meet the senses. Every thing which meets the senses remains just as it was before.” In short, the Romanist avails himself of an old philosophical distinction broached by Aristotle, and gravely questioned in modern times by Locke, between the substance and the accidents in things material. All matter was supposed to have, in addition to those properties which reach the senses (such as shape, colour, smell, taste, consistency, and so forth), some inward nucleus or substance, which could neither be seen, heard, tasted, smelt, nor felt. This old philosophical distinction was found a mighty convenience by Roman Divines. For when their adversaries asked them how the Bread and Wine could be changed into Flesh and Blood, without having the appearance and taste of flesh and blood, they furbished up Aristotle's old distinction, and made a controversial

weapon out of it, saying that the substance of the Bread and Wine was changed into another substance, but that the phenomena, that is, the taste, the smell, the colour, the consistency, remain the same as ever. And this is the form in which the Council of Trent has stereotyped the dogma.

Of this dogma our Church most wisely says, first, that it cannot be proved by Holy Writ. It is of course utterly vain to seek in Scripture for the absurd philosophical distinctions and technicalities, which constitute the real ground of the Romanist's position. Scripture gives us food for the heart, not metaphysical cobwebs to entangle the mind.—But there is another and most fatal objection to the acceptance of any such distinctions; which is this. Once grant that things are not what they seem to be, and that habitually the human senses are imposed upon by the appearance of bread and wine, where there is really nothing but Flesh and Blood; and you cut away the evidence of the Resurrection of Christ, and so supplant the whole of Christianity. Has not God consecrated the evidence of our senses, by resting the proof of the Resurrection of His dear Son on the testimony of veracious persons, who *saw* Him and ate with Him after He was risen? And if God has consecrated this evidence, am I at liberty to tamper with it by foolish subtleties, which open a breach in the fortress of Christianity, whereby the infidel may easily enter?

Next, our Church asserts that it is “repugnant to the plain words of Scripture.” So far from being annihilated by Consecration (as the Romanists pretend), the bread is expressly called “bread” by St. Paul *after* Consecration: “As often as ye eat this *bread*, and drink this *cup*, ye do show forth the Lord's Death till He



come." "Whosoever shall eat this *bread*, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord." And if the words are to be so literally pressed, we must, according to one version of them, say that the cup is the New Testament, which is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole principle of interpretation. And further, in Our Lord's first administration of the Ordinance, how could the Bread, which He held in His hand, be His Body in the literal and carnal sense of the words? which single argument ought for ever to have put to flight so monstrous an absurdity.

Finally: our Church asserts that "Transubstantiation overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament." For a Sacrament has two parts, "an outward visible sign, and an inward spiritual grace." And if you maintain that the substance of Bread and Wine is annihilated in the Lord's Supper (which the Romanists pretend) you leave only the thing signified, and destroy the sign.

What then is the true doctrine of the Eucharist, moving between these two extremes,—the doctrine announced by Holy Scripture, and faithfully echoed by our Church? Nothing more nor less than this, that "the Cup of Blessing which we bless, is the Communion" (means of participating in) "of the Blood of Christ; and that the Bread which we break, is the Communion" (means of participating in) "of the Body of Christ." The elements are the medium of our Communion with Christ in some way altogether mysterious, supersensual, heavenly, and divine,—not to be comprehended by the human reason, and therefore not to be expressed by human definitions. If it be asked what it is which gives the elements this character, the answer is, beyond the



shadow of a doubt, the Consecration. Why are we afraid of the Apostle's own words, because Rome has perverted them? "The Cup of Blessing, WHICH WE BLESS" (there is the Consecration), "is it not" (in virtue of such Blessing) "the Communion of the Blood of Christ?" "The Bread WHICH WE BREAK" (and the Bread is broken in the course of the Prayer of Consecration), "is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?" Why should we be afraid of the precise and admirable language of our own Twenty-eighth Article: "The Body of Christ is *given* in the Supper" (observe, the words are "given, taken, and eaten;" and it is clear from the following paragraph, where the taking and eating only—not the giving—are said to be by faith, that the "giving" must be by Consecration) "only after an heavenly and spiritual manner"? If it be asked what it is in us, which lays hold of this Gift, appropriates it, assimilates it, makes it a strength and a refreshment to the soul, the answer is perfectly clear: "Faith." Without Faith there is no blessing, and no receptivity of blessing, to the individual. Without Faith, in no wise is the recipient of the Consecrated Elements a partaker of Christ, but "rather to his condemnation he doth eat and drink the sign and Sacrament of so great a thing." For "the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten" (not "given," observe, but "received and eaten") "in the Supper is Faith." The faithless communicant resembles the crowd who thronged and pressed our Lord's natural Body, without partaking of any benefit whatever. The faithful communicant resembles that poor woman, who, by touching the hem of His garment, drew forth an instantaneous cure.

Time warns me that I must postpone to another Lec-

ture the further development and illustration of this important doctrine.

Meanwhile, let me conclude this Lecture with some reflections which the first part of our subject has suggested, on the thankfulness which it behoves us to feel for the position which Divine Providence has assigned to us as members of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. If well-balanced views of Scriptural Truth, equally remote from the Romanizing and Rationalizing tendencies of the day, if the union of Scriptural Doctrine with Apostolic Discipline, be any security for the soundness of our faith and the steadiness of our religious principles in these dangerous days, surely we, whose Prayer Books furnish us with such views, and whose Ecclesiastical Constitution presents this happy union, ought to be thoroughly fortified, under God's Blessing, against errors and innovations. But, alas! it must be confessed with shame and sorrow, the great majority of American Churchmen only yield their Church a nominal allegiance; their Churchmanship is not at all the result of choice and reflection, but the merest accident of their position. Where will you find a discriminating appreciation of the excellence of our Liturgy, Catechism, and Articles? Alas! all that the great majority know of the Book, which is for them the interpreter of Holy Scripture, is derived from hearing the Morning and Evening Prayer read in their ears every Sunday, and from some hazy disagreeable reminiscences of the phraseology of the Catechism, when administered to them as a lesson in youth. The Thirty-nine Articles many have literally never read; and if it happens that they have assisted at a christening, a wedding, or a funeral, the interest which those occasions naturally have to the feel-

ings of persons even remotely concerned in them, has quite swallowed up all thought of the precious truths embodied in and proclaimed by the Ritual,—truths adapted to the sanctification of the various periods of human life.

And thus it comes to pass that, in the midst of some notorious extravagances in the direction of Rome, and in the direction of Latitudinarianism, which it is fashionable to decry, the religion of the majority of our people is of a low type,—a religion intolerant indeed of Romanism and Rationalism, but having no real ground of its own to stand upon, and consisting merely in a few impressions derived from Sermons, and a few evangelical phraseologies picked up from Books,—a religion whose Creed, if it had a Creed at all, would probably run thus: “I believe that Faith is the only Grace, and that Preaching is the only Ordinance.” Surely the devout and attentive study of the Prayer Book would lead us to some better and more definite form of Religion than this; would give us more especially those hard and clear conceptions of Christian Doctrine, which must after all be the nerves and stamina of practical religion. A religion of mere sentiment will break down under stress of trial; we need in that hour a religion of well-ascertained principles, which we have tested by bringing them to the criterion of Truth.

It is under this conviction of the want of definiteness and consistency in the popular views of Christianity, that I have thought it well to devote this little work to the illustration and explanation of the highest Service of the Church. The field offers ample variety, as well as topics of the greatest interest. If we cannot without presumption hope to occupy it altogether worthily, let us at least

pray that God will not suffer us to wrong such themes by speaking upon them with cold heart and dead affections, and that He will bless our poor endeavours not only to a better appreciation of the treasures which He has given us in our Prayer Book, but to a warmer and heartier use of it in Divine Worship,—so that we may indeed pray, as His Apostle has taught us, with the spirit and with the understanding also.

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## LECTURE VII.

THE BLESSING OF THE EUCHARIST, WITH A FURTHER  
ILLUSTRATION OF ITS DOCTRINE.

*“He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.”*

1 COR. vi. 17.

IN our last Lecture we traced out the Rationalizing and Romanizing views of the doctrine of the Eucharist, and then showed how the Scriptural doctrine, faithfully echoed by our Church, steers clear of both these errors.

Time then forbade us to remark, what is quite necessary for the full illustration of the subject, that the error both of Rationalists and Romanists has, strange as it may appear to say so, a common principle; and that this is one of the many instances in which extremes meet. Observe, then, that neither Rationalist nor Romanist acknowledges a mystery in the Eucharist. The Rationalist avows explicitly that there is no mystery; that Christ's words of Institution are to be taken figuratively; that the elements are mere emblems of Christ's Body and Blood, and nothing more; that the rite is merely commemorative.



The Romanist equally abolishes the mystery though in another way ; as the Rationalist had eluded the mystery by a figurative, so he no less eludes it by a gross and carnal interpretation. This Bread, he says, becomes substantially flesh ; and this Wine becomes substantially Blood. In that case there is no mystery in our reception of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist ; we press with our teeth that which is flesh ; we taste with our tongue that which is blood ; there is nothing mysterious here ; but merely a carnal animal process, the very notion of which shocks our feelings of reverence as well as our common sense. On the other hand, we hold that while, on the one hand, the consecrated Bread and Wine remain all along in their true and natural substances, they become by consecration the medium by which every faithful communicant "receives and eats after an heavenly and spiritual manner," the Body and Blood of Christ. And if our adversaries ask us with Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" our answer must be that of the three Hebrew youths to Nebuchadnezzar : "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter." We are not ashamed to say frankly, "We do not know how." We are not afraid to acknowledge a mystery in the highest ordinance of the Faith ; and we desire to bear in mind that if a mystery could be explained, and made clear to the human understanding, it would cease to be a mystery. We object to you Rationalists, we object to you Romanists, that the one by a figurative, the other by a gross and carnal interpretation, ye profess to explain the inexplicable. We think that even on subjects of Natural Science, which are not beyond the compass of human reason, professed explanations often serve only to obscure the truth. That Body and Mind reciprocally act upon one another ;



that the blood circulates in living animal bodies ; that the nourishment received by such bodies is assimilated, and becomes part of the animal fabric, either bone, or flesh, or muscle ; all these positions are certain, and may safely be assumed and acted upon ; but as to how these things are, as to what precisely is the mystic link of sympathy between mind and matter, what is the origin of the movement called circulation, why a living body should have an assimilative power over nourishment,—of these points, even in the present very advanced state of science, we must confess ourselves entirely ignorant. Is it to be wondered at if in subjects of Revelation, which notoriously transcend the powers of the human mind, our understanding should sometimes be at fault? If in the researches of Natural Philosophy you can hardly move three steps without coming to a dead wall, how can we suppose that in Divine Philosophy mysteries, precluding all further research, will not meet us at every turn?

It will, however, frequently happen that if, in the acceptance of mysteries, we are humble, patient, and docile, our Heavenly Father will not indeed make them plain to our understandings, but will give us such glimpses of light upon them as will confirm us in our faith. And perhaps we may derive, under His blessing, some such confirmation of our faith from an illustration of the subject (it is nothing more) which we are now about to propose.

There is one other thing besides the Eucharistic Bread, which in Scripture is called, and called repeatedly, “the Body of Christ.” The Church or Society of the faithful is so called. The Church “is His Body,” we are told, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” “Ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular.”

“The Head, even Christ, from whom the whole Body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

And again (with an evident allusion, as the context shows, to the words of Adam respecting his newly-formed partner, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh”), “We are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” In this and other passages the marriage union is pointed at as signifying and representing the spiritual marriage and unity which is betwixt Christ and His Church. And it is much to our purpose to observe, that this spiritual union is spoken of explicitly as a *mystery*: “This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”

Now, in the first place, we can easily see that when the Church is said to be the Body of Christ, just as when the Bread in the Eucharist is said to be His Body (or the Communion of His Body), the words *have* a figurative meaning. No one will dispute this. The eyes, by which the body guides itself, are in the head. The thinking faculty, the willing and determining faculty, are supposed to reside in the head. The brain reflects, and then issues its volitions to the hand and the foot, through whom those volitions are carried out. Similarly Christ in Heaven illuminates His Church by the Holy Spirit, and shows her the way wherein she should walk. Christ issues His mandates to us through His Word, and through His Spirit in our consciences; and we are His instruments for carrying them out. All this is perfectly true; and all this serves to explain to us the reason why the Church is called the Body of Christ.

But is the expression *nothing more than a figure*? Is the union betwixt Christ and His Church, in virtue of which He is our Head, and we are His members, merely a metaphor, a poetical form of speech? God forbid that we should think so! for to think so would be to forfeit our greatest comfort. We are verily and indeed united to Christ,—after an heavenly and spiritual manner,—a manner no less real, because it is spiritual and heavenly. Just as the immortal spirit is really united to the body, and just as the thread of connexion between the spirit and the body is that mysterious thing which we call Life; so our spirits are really and truly united to Christ in Heaven, and the thread of connexion is that mysterious Agent, by whose operation He was conceived of the Virgin, and is conceived again in our hearts, the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, called, in the Nicene Creed, “the Lord, and Giver of Life.” This Spirit, the human soul of Our Lord possesses *without measure*; we, on the other hand, possess Him according to the measure of the gift of the Christ; but the connexion between us and Christ established by this medium, so far from being a mere figure, is the most real union in the world. All other unions,—the union of the head with the members, of the branches with the vine, of the man with his wife,—are but shadows of this heavenly, spiritual, ineffable, and incomprehensible union, just as the furniture in Moses’ Tabernacle was but a poor dim copy of the things showed him in the mount.—Yet, on the other hand, what a monstrous and revolting absurdity would it be to represent this union of Our Blessed Lord with the members of His Church, as in any sense natural, earthly, and carnal! Only imagine the absurdity of a man’s pressing St. Paul’s words,—“We are members of His Body, of

His flesh, and of His bones," so literally as to say that he himself had an actual blood relationship to Our Lord, and was a member of His family according to the flesh ! Or suppose that because it is written, " We are members of His Body," another should assert that he was literally the very foot, or the very hand of Christ, which was nailed to the Cross ! These speculations would be justly regarded as the very ravings of fanaticism ; and the man who should broach them would only be thought worthy of being lodged in an asylum for lunatics.

Now if the Church be called the Body of Christ, on the one hand, not by a mere figure, nor yet, on the other hand, in a literal, natural, and carnal sense, but in a heavenly mystery, why should not the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist be called His Body and Blood in a manner something similar ? The Bread and Wine are unquestionably *figures* of His Body and Blood, the corn bruised in the mill aptly representing Him who was bruised for our iniquities, the wine (or pressed grape) aptly emblemizing that precious Blood, which was pressed out in the endurance of the curse for our sakes. But are the consecrated elements *nothing more than figures* ? Not so. They are in a heavenly mystery, which we presume not to understand, and therefore which we presume not to define, the Body and Blood of Christ, insomuch that to those who " rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ."

But it is surely fanatical, contrary not only to sobriety, but to reverence, to maintain that in a natural, animal, carnal way the elements are the Body and Blood of Christ. To take up such a position is to press the



words of Scripture against common sense, and against the analogy of other passages in which the same words are used, to a most revolting conclusion.

Our illustration has led us to speak of the real living oneness of the Church with Christ, even as the Body is united to the Head, and as the Branches are united with the Vine.

And we shall gain still further light upon our subject by remarking that of this union with Christ the Holy Communion is the great appointed means and instrumentality. Union with Christ is the blessing shadowed forth by the use of the outward visible sign, and actually realized by the soul of every faithful communicant. I say it is the blessing shadowed forth. For what is the use made of the Bread and Wine? They are taken and eaten. And what becomes of sustenance when received by a healthy frame? It is assimilated; or, in other words, in due time it becomes part of the frame which receives it, and cannot be distinguished from other parts of the same kind. The food becomes bone, or flesh, or muscle, as the case may be. In an analogous way the Heavenly or Spiritual Food, which is given in this Supper after an heavenly and spiritual manner, and which Faith, wherever it exists, assimilates (for our faith is the organ of digestion,—that which alone makes the food available), is incorporated with our inner man; and He, upon whose Body and Blood we have fed, becomes one with us, and we with Him. So that there is something more in this Sacrament, and something higher, than a mere spiritual Presence of Christ. That spiritual Presence is covenanted to all united worship, even when the Holy Supper is not celebrated; for the charter of mere Common Prayer runs thus: “Where two or three are



gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." But you will at once see that the idea of Christ's Presence with us, and the idea of Christ's Union with us, are totally distinct; and that the latter idea, while it involves the former, goes far beyond it in blessedness. When we pay our respects at an earthly court, we are in the Presence of the Sovereign; but when in the comparative privacy of our homes, we feel the full solace of all the charities and sympathies of domestic life, this is something more than the presence of our relations and friends,—it is a union of hearts with them. And, similarly, it is a high privilege (as doubtless angels account it equally with ourselves) merely to present ourselves before the King of Kings, to do homage at His footstool in conjunction with our brethren. But it is a still higher and more blessed privilege (and one for which the angels have no capacity, because Christ took not their nature upon Him, as He hath taken ours) to be united with the Lord, so as to become one Spirit with Him, so as to be "members" (after a true and real, and yet after an heavenly manner) "of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones."

And here I must advert to an erroneous and unscriptural practice, which some would introduce into our Churches, though it has not a particle of sanction from the Liturgy. All erroneous practices will be found ultimately to spring from unsound views; and so I believe it is in this case. The practice I refer to is that of being present at the actual Celebration of the Lord's Supper without communicating, and the accounting such presence as an acceptable work of devotion, though it be of an inferior grade. See how the view we have propounded

fences off this mistake. The great characteristic Blessing of the Ordinance is union with Christ; His Body and Blood are given in the Supper, not to be gazed upon by spectators, but to be partaken of by faithful communicants. Unless there is a participation, you defeat the end of the Ordinance. If the Church be asked to produce her warrant for the Celebration, she can produce none but this, "*Take, eat: this is My Body.*" You will observe that "*Take, eat,*" are the very first words of the warrant. Then if a man comes without taking and eating, is it not a perverse thwarting of the Lord's design and intention? If a Sovereign should bid his councillors assemble for the purpose of giving him their advice in an important affair of state, and in consequence of this summons should expect from all of them some interchange of sentiment and discourse; and if some should come to the council, but when there should refuse to open their lips, what would this be but to defeat the design of calling the council, and make the attendance of such persons at it a futile mockery?

And if the Lord has instituted a Sacrament for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the participation of it, and we come to witness, but not to partake, is not this a plain perversion of what He meant by it? The Body and Blood of Christ are given in the Supper to be partaken of, and the Consecration for any other purpose than that of partaking has no warrant of Our Lord's at all, and would therefore be vain and impious.

There is one most precious and consolatory thought (connected with what has been said) which, in the conclusion of this Lecture, we must develope. The union with Christ, which the Supper of the Lord both emblem-

atizes, and, when duly received, conveys, is union with Christ *in His Death*. The Body and Blood are exhibited by the Bread and Wine in a state of separation from one another. Now the Blood is in Scripture said to be the Life; and accordingly the separation of the Blood from the Body indicates that death has taken place. It is, then, with a dying Christ, and so with an atoning and propitiating Christ, that the Holy Supper, duly received, makes us one. Ah! what an infinite comfort, when we consider the number and seriousness of our responsibilities, and the grievous failures of the best of us in meeting them! Christ, we know, expiated all sins upon the Cross. "By His one oblation of Himself once offered" (as our Prayer of Consecration has it) "He hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

Now in this Holy Ordinance the great blessing of union with Christ is offered to our faith,—of union with a dying, bleeding, agonizing Christ. We have the closest intercourse with Him, "in whom," as St. Paul says, "all died." Christ died as representing sinful Humanity, lying under the ban and curse of sin; though personally standing entirely aloof from it, He identified Himself with our guilt, and took upon Him to answer all charges against us. If now we be one Spirit with Him,—if our union with Him be cemented inwardly by faith, outwardly by ordinance,—we too have in Him really and truly died for sin, and by that death in Christ have endured sin's penalty. The Law, the accusing conscience, the accusing spirit, have in that case no more charge against us,—we may go free. Oh, what a strength in dying to the *power* of sin may be gathered

from this consideration, that in the dear Saviour, with whom we are so vitally and closely united in this blessed Sacrament, we have already died to its guilt! Oh! shall we not long for that union with Him,—union with His Merits, with His Cross, with His Passion, with His Spirit, which faith indeed avails itself of, but which this Ordinance conveys and seals? For this union, be it remembered, is the secret not only of all peace and pardon, but of all strength; and the tighter the bonds of it are drawn, the greater will be our power over indwelling corruption, and the more close and happy will be our walk with God.



## LECTURE VIII.

### OF THE SENTENCES OF ADMINISTRATION.

“*We that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.*”

JOHN vi. 57.

THE two sentences with which among ourselves the Communion in either kind is administered, exhibit a little miniature of the position of our Church, combining (as she everywhere does) two different aspects (or, perhaps, I should rather say, two different elements) of Truth. The former sentence is a prayer: “The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee (the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee), preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life,” and is the same, with a very slight addition,<sup>1</sup> as that which was

<sup>1</sup> The Form in the Sacramentary of Gregory is: “The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto eternal life,”—omitting



used in the Mediæval Church, and is still used in the Church of Rome. The latter is an exhortation : “ Take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee ; and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving ; ” “ Drink this, in remembrance that Christ’s Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful ; ”—and appeared for the first time in the second Prayer Book of King Edward VI., where it was appointed to be used alone, and to supersede altogether the first sentence, which had appeared alone in the first draught of the Prayer Book three years earlier.

It will be observed that the first sentence presents the Sacrament under the aspect of a means of Grace, as a rite, which (under certain assumed conditions) is of a salutary character : “ The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,—the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee,—preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.”

The second sentence, the composition, and substitution of which for the first, is no doubt due to the influence of the Continental Reformers, Bucer and Martyr, represents the Sacrament under the aspect of a Commemoration, and also recognizes in a marked way the doctrine of the Twenty-eighth Article, that “ the Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.”

This last was the only sentence of Administration in

any mention of the body of the communicant. The introduction of the word “ body ” makes the form more complete, and conveys the important lesson which we have already dwelt upon, as taught us by that clause in the Prayer of Access : “ That our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body.”



the English Book of Common Prayer, until the reign of Queen Elizabeth. When her accession gave an opportunity for consolidating the work of the Reformation, which work had been thrown back by the persecutions and troubles of Mary's reign, a Royal Commission was appointed, the leading spirit of which seems to have been Guest, to review the second Prayer Book of King Edward VI., and make such additions and alterations in it as, without compromising Truth, might conciliate different parties in the Church. It was then thought that though the latter sentence contained much and valuable truth, it was by itself liable to the misinterpretation that the Lord's Supper is nothing more than a memorial; that this misinterpretation would be precluded by recalling the earlier and equally Scriptural sentence; and that therefore for the future they should both be used together, and coalesce into one formulary. And this arrangement has remained to the present day.

But in this connexion we may mention another historical circumstance connected with these sentences, though it did not issue in any modification or alteration of them. The application of the sentences to each individual communicant separately is ruled by the use in each of them of the singular number: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for *thee*,—the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for *thee*,—preserve *thy* body and soul unto everlasting life." This individual application of the blessing of the Ordinance was objected to by the Presbyterians at the Savoy Conference. Holding strongly the doctrine of Particular Redemption, they thought that it could not truly be affirmed that for every communicant the Body of Christ was given, and His Blood shed. These great privileges

they thought could be predicated only of the elect; and they expressed a wish, therefore, that the sentences might be worded in the plural, and that the Minister be not required to deliver the Sacramental elements “into every particular communicant’s hand.” Their recommendation of pluralizing the words, and using them only once for each body of communicants, is often adopted at present, and (as far as I know) without any Episcopal censure, sometimes from sheer necessity (the communicants being very numerous, and the Ministers only one or two), in which case it is surely very uncharitable, and savours somewhat of a Pharisaical adherence to the letter of the law to object to it; but sometimes also, I fear, because that mode of administration is really thought preferable to the mode which is actually prescribed. It may unsettle this preference in the minds of some, and lead them to look with suspicion on this deviation from the ordinary practice, to know that the alteration was first advocated by those who had a direct doctrinal end to subserve by it; and that these divines designed to insinuate, by pluralizing the sentence, the false and deadly error, which deprives the Gospel of half its lustre, and which (in truth) leaves it no Gospel at all for the mass of mankind,—that only for a select few of the human race was the Blood of Atonement shed, and that they only have an interest in the Blessings of Redemption.

What has been said of the history of these sentences furnishes many interesting reflections, which have a practical bearing.

1. It has been often thrown out as a taunt against our Prayer Book, that the Religion embodied in its formularies is a compromise between two conflicting principles.

This is an ill-natured way of representing a circumstance, which, looked at in the right light, does credit to our Zion. What is meant by the taunt is, that the Prayer Book embraces in its system different elements of Truth, —elements which find acceptance with minds of quite different classes. If to embrace these different elements in one system be a compromise, all that we can say in our defence (and surely it is enough) is, that the Holy Scriptures themselves are a compromise also. No candid person will deny that Scripture contains very strong statements on both sides of the Calvinistic and Arminian controversy, on both sides of the Faith and Works controversy, on both sides of the Baptismal Regeneration controversy; nor was there ever any errorist yet who did not appeal, in maintaining his error, to certain passages of the Bible, and to whom those passages do not seem to lend some support, if texts of an opposite character are put out of court. In the matter before us the Scriptures say strong things on the mystery of the Holy Communion, and on its efficacy as a means of Grace. For let those persuade themselves, who can do so, that the words, “This is My Body,” “The Bread, which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?” mean nothing more than, “This is a figure of My Body, and of your participation in it.” On the other hand, the Scriptures assert with clearness the non-mysterious side of the subject, and the commemorative character and purport of the Eucharist: “This do in remembrance of Me;” “As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show forth the Lord’s death till He come.” What our Service Book does, and that at the culminating point of the Rite, is to tread accurately in the footsteps of Holy Scripture,—to recognize both the mysterious

efficacy, and also the commemorative aspect, of the Sacrament, as it were in one breath: "The Body, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee."

Exactly similar is the treatment which other moot points receive at the hands of the Prayer Book. For example, that of Absolution. On the one hand, the power of judicial Absolution, claimed by the Church of Rome, is effectually disclaimed. Exercised as it is in that corrupt Communion, where it enters as a regular practice into the normal life of a Christian, to pour out all his secret sins periodically at the feet of a Priest, and to rise up relieved (as he believes) of the burden of them, Absolution is nowhere seen in the Scripture, and it is accordingly nowhere seen in the Prayer Book. But is Ministerial Absolution therefore a figment, to be thrown overboard altogether? Have Christian Ministers no power or commandment to convey the tidings of God's Absolution, or to intercede for it on behalf of their people? No one who reads the Prayer Book (and we humbly think, no one who reads the Bible) will draw this inference from either one or the other. If there seem to be an inconsistency of tone in our Service Book, —an attempt to strike two notes at once, we really cannot help it; we fall back on Holy Scripture, where we find exactly the same feature, as our sufficient justification. And be it remembered that two or more notes struck together do not necessarily produce discord. They *may* produce harmony. While, if only one note were struck, the effect would be monotony.

We acquiesce therefore thankfully in this composite character of our Liturgy; and think that it teaches a lesson most suitable for the present times. Our formu-



laries were doubtless designed to be comprehensive, and to embrace the different aspects, under which Truth presents itself to different minds. And our sympathies should travel in the same direction as our formularies. It would be a terrible calamity to our Church, if it were to represent only a single section of opinion, and if the advocates of that opinion should succeed in excluding from it those who were more forcibly impressed with another side of Truth. While no compromise must be had with error, let our Church represent, not only in its formularies, but in the opinions of its adherents, the many-sidedness of the Gospel of Christ. And that this end may be furthered by our course of action as individuals, let us joyfully recognize as brethren, and strive to gain good from, those whose opinions run in a different groove from our own, though both theirs and ours may very probably converge towards one central Truth. Of this we may be sure, that no one mind sees at once with entire impartiality the entire doctrinal system of the Bible. Of the religious views of every one it may be said, that they require supplementing by the religious views of some one else. Even men inspired unto infallibility, men whose tongues were precluded from error, because they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, by no means viewed Divine Truth under one light;—they brought out, each according to the leaning of his own mind, a different feature of it. Judging from their respective Epistles, nothing can well be more distinct (not to say discrepant) than the aspects under which the Gospel presented itself to St. Paul and St. James, or again to St. Paul and St. John. A crude, hasty, and irreverent mind will cry out that St. Paul's view of Justification cannot stand with St. James's view; that any attempt to



embrace the two in one system must result in a compromise, and prove (in short) a halting between two opinions. Allegations of a similar character have been often made against the Prayer Book; and it is not derogatory to the Prayer Book (rather the contrary) to admit that it is open to them. Two different parties have exercised an influence in its construction; two views of Truth,—the mediæval view and that taken by the Reformers,—are represented in it. But if in the Holy Scriptures themselves, which are above the reach of criticism, we find the germs of both views, this feature of our Liturgy, so far from being an objection to it, is rather a strong recommendation. Let us beware how we mutilate this feature, if we value the comprehensiveness of our Church, and think that isolation from our brethren in Christ is a calamity to be deplored. It would be a short-lived triumph, indeed, if one party in the Church should succeed in striking out of the Service Book those passages of the Liturgy, which were not conceived in its own mould of thought. With the passages, we should probably lose many, whose sentiments they represented; and the Church would be palsied by the secession of some of her best and most gifted members.

2. Another valuable lesson, of a more personal character, is to be drawn from the singular form of the Sentence of Administration, for which, as we have seen, the Church on one occasion made a stand upon principle. Most wisely and well did the Bishops on that occasion reply to the Presbyterians: “It is most requisite that the minister deliver the bread and wine into every particular communicant’s hand, and repeat the words in the singular number; forso much as it is the propriety of Sacraments to make particular obsignation to each believer.”

That is to say, the blessings purchased for all, without respect of persons, by the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, are made over and applied to the individual through the channel of the Sacraments. The preached Word is for the whole congregation, assembled in Christ's name ; it finds whom it may find ; the seed is thrown broadcast by the sower, and lights, as it may chance, upon receptive or irreceptive soil. The gracious invitations of the Gospel are couched in terms altogether general : " Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ;" " Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ;" " God so loved the world, that He gave His only Begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But there is an instinctive feeling in the human mind, that in a general offer, or a general expression of benevolence, there is not the same amount of condescension, graciousness, encouragement, as in one which particularizes our own case. If a king, as he rides along the streets of his metropolis, orders his almoner to fling gold pieces out of his purse among the people, to be caught and gathered up by any one who is fortunate enough to catch them, that is a proof of his bountifulness and consideration for his subjects generally. But it is a far greater condescension, and one which would give his subjects greater boldness in approaching him, if he should be seen advancing with a gold piece towards some poor man's hovel, and entering should say to him, " I have heard of your distress, and this gold piece is meant for your relief." Now God announces to us in His Word a general amnesty and offer of spiritual blessings ; but in order further to help our infirm faith, He approaches us individually in His Sacraments, with these gifts in His

Hand. The Word says that Christ “tasted death for every man.” The Sacrament comes, and proffers to each man individually the benefits of His Death, saying, “The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,—the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee,—preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.”

Yes; it is not philanthropy merely, which God has shown in the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ, but *a distinguishing love of individual souls*. The two sentiments are wholly distinct. Philanthropy is like the moonlight, exceedingly beautiful, when thrown in a silver flood over a landscape or group of buildings, but too cold to quicken life in Nature, or to bring out the blossom and perfume of flowers. But distinguishing personal love is like the sun’s ray, genial and warm, and strikes deep into the heart of him on whom it fastens, and quickens that heart into lively emotions of gratitude and love. Now God in the Gospel deals with us as individual souls. He knew each one of us by name from all eternity, before we were shaped by His creative Hand. He made His first approach to us in reconciling Grace, when He caused the Gospel to be preached in the land, where we were first destined to see the light. He made His next approach, when He brought us individually in the way of that Gospel, surrounded us with Christian influences, and appointed for us a Christian Education. And can we still question whether He entertains towards ourselves special designs of Love? Then all remaining doubt may be dissipated by His Sacraments. He laid His Hand upon us when we were infants, and shed His Spirit upon us, and said to us, “Live.” And now in the second and greater Sacrament He proffers to each of

us the Living Bread, to support the life already imparted. Oh, for the appetite to desire this nourishment! Oh, for the faith to feed upon it in the inner man! Oh, that all question of God's condescending graciousness to ourselves may vanish altogether with the proof of it which is thus given, when His Minister approaches us with the consecrated Elements, and prays that by His Son's Body and Blood our bodies and souls may be preserved unto everlasting life!

3. The Administration of the Communion (from the formulary of which we have been drawing these lessons) is the climax of the Ordinance, for which all that precedes has prepared the way, and to which the succeeding Prayer, and Hymn, and Blessing form an appropriate conclusion. Pursuing our former comparison of the Communion Office to a great Church or Cathedral, we have now advanced up to the very Table of the Lord, and have knelt there, to communicate with Him, and now have only to descend again into that part of the Building, which lies behind the Altar, and so pass out. But in what an act have we been engaged! an act whose influence and effects should surely appear in us afterwards. If we have been faithful and believing communicants, the act has been instrumental in uniting us to Christ, and making us one Spirit with the Lord. And the exceeding closeness of that union who shall describe? It is symbolized to us in this Sacrament by the union of food with the bodily frame. Now the food which we receive, in process of time becomes part (and an indistinguishable part) of ourselves; it becomes muscle, or bone, or flesh; is assimilated, in short, to the substance of the body. This, and nothing less than this, is the union which the Lord appoints to be symbolical of His

Oneness with His true Church. And observe another doctrine conveyed to us by the Administration. The Bread and Wine, the symbols and vehicles of the Body and Blood, are given, taken, and received separately. By the separateness of the Elements is indicated the Death of Christ; for the separation of the Body from the Blood, which is the life thereof, is what constitutes Death. By partaking thereof separately of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood, we are united to Christ *in His Death*. We become one with Him who died upon the Cross. His Death is our death, and we in Him have died unto sin. We have paid the penalty of our transgression of God's Law, so that Divine Justice has no more any claim upon us. And in doing so we have died to the power of the sinful principle, which has relaxed its grasp upon us, and set us free to serve God in the newness of the spirit, and to present to Him, our wills being liberated from their thralldom, the reasonable sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies. Such is an outline of the train of thought, by which we pass from the Administration to the first Post-Communion Prayer, which, with the "Gloria in Excelsis," must form the subject of another Lecture.



## LECTURE IX.

## OF THE POST-COMMUNION.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come . . . And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives."—  
JOHN xvii. 1. MATT. xxvi. 30.

IN order to derive its full profit from the Holy Communion, care must be taken, not only to prepare ourselves beforehand for its reception, but to guide the mind and heart into a right groove of sentiment subsequently. Of all exercises of Devotion generally, and of this in particular, it is true that, after having strung up our wills to them previously, we are prone afterwards to collapse. This is due partly to natural infirmity, which cannot bear too long a tension of the mind upon high subjects, calculated to call out all its powers. But then this natural infirmity, though in itself innocent, lays us open to real spiritual dangers, indolence, softness, and a certain weariness (sometimes amounting almost to disgust) of divine things. Mere fatigue is no sin; but our enemies are always at hand to take their occasion from fatigue, or from whatever else seems to open an avenue to the will. And hence it comes to pass that, as the experience of all good Christians will testify, at no time does Satan seem more on the alert,—at no time do our inbred corruptions give us more trouble, than after we have devoted some good period of time to Religious Exercises. To engage in prayer (and to communicate devoutly, is to engage in prayer of the highest kind), is to

throw down the glove to the Devil ; and those who do so rarely fail to find that he picks it up again.

It follows, then, that considerable attention should be paid to the manner in which we withdraw from the Presence of our Lord in the Holy Communion. A musician not only gets his instrument into tune, and makes trial of it with certain preluding touches, before he begins to play ; but also brings the strain to a regular and gradual close, not breaking it off rudely and abruptly, but so managing the strings or notes, that the cadence shall gently die away in the ear of the listeners. And he who would gather great profit from the Blessed Sacrament must not only try his heart by self-examination and preparatory prayer beforehand, but also, when his necessary intercourse with the world again begins, must endeavour to retain upon his mind the impressions he has received, and allow them still to vibrate softly in his spirit.

Now I believe that as the Introductory part of the Communion Office is designed to get the mind into a suitable frame for the Ordinance, so the latter part is designed to indicate the spirit which we should cultivate, if we wish duly to follow up our Communion, and still to inhale its atmosphere. I do not regard either part of the Service as having fulfilled its whole design to the Communicant, when it has been read through and responded to in Church. The Lord's Prayer is not merely destined for use as a piece of devotion ; it is throughout a teaching Prayer, showing us upon what blessings our hearts should be most fondly set, for what blessings we must petition modestly and with great reserve, in what spirit towards our fellow-men we must approach God, and a thousand other precious lessons, which no tongue

or pen can exhaust. And our Church Services are (of course in a lesser degree, but still in their measure) constructed upon the same principle; they not only put words in our mouth when we pray publicly, but teach us also privately, if we study them, both how we should pray, and also how we should desist from Prayer. It is on this view of their significance, that we shall in this Lecture make some remarks on the Prayer and Hymn which follow the administration, and which go by the name of the Post-Communion.

Our Blessed Lord, after instituting the Holy Supper, and apparently before He left the "large upper room furnished," which was the scene of the Institution, offered up the great High-priestly Prayer, which is recorded in St John xvii. Then, before quitting the chamber (it is thus that the events of that solemn evening best arrange themselves), He sang with His disciples a Hymn, —in all probability the latter part of the great Hallel (or Hymn of praise) usually sung at the Jewish Passover, and consisting of six Psalms, the one hundred and thirteenth to the one hundred and eighteenth inclusive. That there should be, then, certain public Devotions after the Communion seems to be a practice traced upon the primitive Institution, and quite accordant with our Lord's example. But more than this. There are one or two thoughts, as we shall see, in our Lord's Post-Communion Prayer, which find an echo, more or less distinct, in the Post-Communion of our own Service.

1. Our Lord's Prayer in the chapter referred to is called the Great High-priestly Prayer. It consists of an Intercession for His disciples to the end of time. And what is the leading topic of this Intercession? It is the unity of His followers. "Holy Father, keep through

Thine own Name" (literally, *in Thine own Name* —in the acknowledgment of it) "those whom Thou hast given Me, that *they may be one*, as we are." "Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they *all may be one*; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

Now listen to the distinct echo of these petitions for unity in the noble Prayer of our Post-Communion. After thanking God for that "He doth vouchsafe to feed us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and doth assure us thereby of His favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical Body of His Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people," we thus proceed: "And we most humbly beseech Thee so to assist us with Thy Grace, that we *may continue in that holy fellowship*." In the One Bread broken among many communicants, we have just seen the symbol of Christian unity. If we have been faithful partakers of that one Bread, we have been drawn closer in heart and sympathy to our Brethren, by the very fact that we have been drawn closer to the Lord. It is impossible to adhere closely to the Head, without a close adherence to the other members. So now we pray most appropriately that "*we may continue in that holy fellowship*," in which the Ordinanċe, duly received, has placed us. Now by what means (for this is the practical question for those who have communicated) is this continuance to be secured? Our Lord Himself points out the means, when He prays, "Keep in Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, *that they*



*may be one;*" His beloved disciple points it out, when He writes, "If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have *fellowship* one with another." To be kept in God's Name is to be kept in the constant practical acknowledgment of His Holiness on one hand, and His Love on the other. To walk in the light is only another form of stating the same thing. For light is compounded of two kinds of rays, bright and sombre; and for this reason God is in the Scriptures called Light, because in His character there are the more awful, and also the more lovely and attractive perfections. To walk in the light, then, as He is in the light, is to hold both classes of these perfections before the mind's eye, and to be practically influenced by both,—in other words, it is to walk in "the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." A spirit of holy awe, which makes us dread above all things to incur the Divine displeasure, a spirit of fervent love, relieving that awe, and changing it into an affectionate reverence—such a love as takes away from obedience the irksomeness of restraint, and makes God's service perfect freedom,—this is the double spirit which must habitually influence us, if we would walk in the light, and be kept in God's Name. And the natural and necessary result of being under the influence of this spirit, will be a holy fellowship with our Brethren in Christ, whose hearts by the same supernatural attraction are being drawn to the same centre as our own. For the unity of the true Church of Christ does not stand in any outward forms of worship or ecclesiastical discipline, but in a living union and communion with the Church's Head. There may be uniformity where there is none of this unity, persons of the most opposite religious sentiments and principles being externally held



together by their nominal adherence to the same Religious Community. And, on the other hand, this unity may exist, where there is, and can be, no uniformity, many true servants of God and followers of Christ being doubtless found in all the different sections of the Christian world. It is such a spiritual nearness to Christ as secures a spiritual nearness to our Brethren, which we sue for in the Post-Communion Prayer, and which is the great grace to be cultivated in pursuance of the Ordinance, and as the legitimate expansion of it in our lives. And might not this sentiment be fostered by distinctly regarding our fellow-Christians as members of the Lord's Body, by representing them to ourselves as such, when we do acts of considerateness and kindness to them? Let us think, when we are doing service to any of them, —“This is service done to the Lord; for so truly and entirely is He One with His Church, that He lives in them, and is wounded or comforted through their sides.” Of a saint of old it is recorded that with the greatest alacrity she ministered to the sick and suffering, from the reflection that their outward circumstances were only a disguise, that their poverty and maladies were a sort of Sacrament of Christ's Presence, indicating where He was, and that His Divine Presence was hidden underneath them.

2. We have spoken of holding the awful and attractive perfections of God before the eyes of our minds, and of thus walking in the Light, and having fellowship one with another. The same idea repeats itself with a very slight modification in the Hymn “Gloria in Excelsis,” with which the people's share of the Office concludes. It is a very ancient Hymn, frequently mentioned by Chrysostom as forming part of the Communion Service,

and used apparently by the primitive Christians as a Hymn for Morning Devotions. The blossom out of which this beautiful flower unfolds itself is the Song of the Angels at the Nativity, of which the whole Hymn is an expansion. This song was first sung at Bethlehem,—a village, whose name means the House of Bread—a name not without deep significance ; for it was here that the living Bread was first found, which came down from Heaven ;—in other words, it was here that Our Lord was born. His Body He gives in this Sacrament to be the food of our souls ; and therefore at the celebration of this Sacrament, in which His Body is represented and conveyed, we appropriately sing the Song of the Nativity : “ Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men,” and enlarge upon it with appropriate sentiments of devotion. The whole piece falls into three Paragraphs,—a division pointing to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, each of whom is confessed in the final clause. The first Paragraph is a burst of exulting praise, in which the Church upon Earth once again presumes to re-echo the strains which float downwards to Earth from angelic Harps. But in the second Paragraph she recognizes clearly that though even at present privileged to join with the choir of Heaven, she is still militant—“tossed upon the waves of this troublesome world.” For this Paragraph consists of fervent and most humble prayers to the one Mediator to have mercy upon us, to look upon us with pity from the Mediatorial Throne, and to receive our prayer.

This interlacing of the acknowledgment of sin and weakness with joyous and exulting praise is quite in keeping with what we observed upon in the former part of the Service ; the profound humility of the Prayer of

Access succeeding immediately to the "Holy, Holy, Holy," of the Seraphim. While privileged to pass through the veil into the immediate Presence Chamber of the Divine Majesty, and to worship God in the very strains which Angels themselves employ, we sinners must never forget that we are sinners, sore beset by the corruption of our nature and sinful infirmity, and that it is only through the Mediator that we can draw nigh to the Heavenly Throne. And more especially are these reflections suitable after the Communion, when we are just about to close, and finally present to God, our high sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; and the most hasty glance behind us upon the regulation of our minds and hearts during the performance of the Service must serve to show many shortcomings, many failures in fervour and zeal, if not in attention. So this second Paragraph is a virtual placing of our poor Services in the hands of the Mediator, and an implicit prayer to Him to take away the sin that is in them, and then to offer them for us, and procure their acceptance by His Mediation. There is something very touching in that part of the appeal, "Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us." Christ is now exalted far above the reach of sorrow and temptation; He has entered into His Glory; and has exchanged the revilings of men, which reached His ear when on the Cross, for the adoration of the Seraphim. Yet we do not, we cannot, believe that His altered circumstances have changed His heart of love towards us. Rather the contrary. He has carried with Him into Heaven the dint made by His Passion upon His Mind as well as upon His Body; and the remembrance of what He underwent for us on earth unlocks towards us the sluice of His compassion as He

sits above. We may be well assured that He, who once left the royalties of Heaven out of love to us, will not, now that He has had experience of our miseries on earth, be unmindful of us amidst those royalties. And so, very much in the strain of the penitent robber (would that we could imitate his faith as closely as we express his sentiments !), we pray Him to remember us, now that He is come into His Kingdom :—"Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us."

The third Paragraph again rises into the language of praise, ascribing glory to the Blessed Trinity, and specially to Him who, under the Mediatorial Kingdom, is the Central Figure of the Sacred Three, and the Representative of God to the creatures : "Thou only art holy ; Thou only art the Lord ; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father."

And now summarily to gather up the teaching of our Communion Service respecting the way in which the Ordinance should be followed up. First, we should strive after a closer walk with God, and a more loving and unselfish fellowship with our Brethren in Christ. And, secondly, we should live much in the element of praise and adoration, endeavouring to associate ourselves with the company of Heaven in their exercises of Devotion, while at the same time we mix with these joyful and exulting strains, constant and fervent ejaculations to Our Lord, in acknowledgment of our guilt and infirmity, and appeal from hour to hour of each day, with strong assurance of faith, to His Sympathy and Power. Endeavour during the week succeeding your Communion, to throw your devotional sentiments into this mould ; and thus ascertain by experience the significance and appro-

priateness of the Post-Communion Service, as a sequel to the Administration of the Holy Supper.

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## LECTURE X.

### OF THE BENEDICTION.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.”—JOHN xiv. 27.

WHAT is a Benediction? It is of the nature of an Intercessory Prayer. The Church is so bound up together in God’s eyes,—nay, men in general are so bound up together by common interests and a common hope,—that Prayers are commanded to be offered by all men for all, in acknowledgment and in pursuance of this relation. And the prayers which we offer for others, as distinct from those in which we seek our own private good, are termed intercessory. A Benediction, however, though of the nature of an Intercessory Prayer, is something more specific. In the limited and strict sense of the word, it is an Intercessory Prayer, offered by one who is invested with some authority over those for whom he prays. The authority may be natural, civil, or ecclesiastical. Of benedictions, bestowed on the ground of natural authority over the persons receiving them, we have instances in the history of the Patriarchs. We read of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau, of Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manasseh. Again; we find David and Solomon blessing their people, the one at the introduction of the ark into the new Tabernacle, which had been pro-



vided for it, the other at the dedication of the Temple. Here the authority must have been civil or political; for the kings of Israel did not belong to the tribe in which was the Priesthood. But finally the authority to bless may be ecclesiastical. One chief function of the sacred tribe of Levi under the Mosaic Ritual was to bless in the Name of the Lord; and for the performance of this function by the Priests a special formulary was prescribed by Jehovah Himself. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon, thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Conformably to the genius of Christianity, which nowhere (save in the Lord's Prayer) prescribes any formulary, and which is generally averse to such prescription, as teaching us to serve God, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit, no words of Benediction are enjoined in the New Testament upon the Christian Minister;—the form is left free to the discretion of the Church, guided (as she was to be) by the Spirit of Christ ever present in her. But who can doubt that the authority to bless in the Name of the Lord still remains in the Ministry of the Church, now that that Ministry, like the Church itself, has been brought out into the clearer light of the New Dispensation? Nay; who can doubt not only that the authority remains, but that the exercise of it is attended with results of a much higher order, results which reach much deeper into the inner and true life of the soul, than it was under the former state of things? As much as the ministration of

righteousness exceeds in glory the ministration of condemnation. in such proportion must the Benedictions of the Christian be more blessed and more effectual than those of the Jewish minister. Only let it not be forgotten that neither has the smallest absolute and independent authority; neither is more than a minister. The office of Ministry, whether under the old or new Dispensation, is only a channel and vehicle, by no means a source, of Grace. It is not really the minister in either case who blesses, but Christ who thus uses His ministry. The source and fountain of all Benediction is Our Lord's Intercession for us in Heaven. He intercedes for us as being bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, connected with us by a natural tie; as being King of Kings, of whose authority earthly dominion is but a shadow; and finally as being the great High Priest, who has entered into the Heavenly Sanctuary with His own Blood. When His Ministers bless His People in His Name, it is an echo of His continual and effective Benediction floating down to the Earth, and intercepted in the Ordinances of the Church.

We will now consider, in closing this series of Lectures, the particular form which our Church has given to her most solemn Benediction,—that which occurs at the end of the Communion Office. It runs thus: “The Peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. *Amen.*”

The former clause, which speaks of the Peace of

God, appeared for the first time in the first Reformed Book of Common Prayer; nor, we are persuaded, could any form of words be devised more appropriate and more scriptural.

Here again the words are traced upon the history which has come down to us of the original Institution. For it was after the Last Supper (see the second verse of chapter xiii.) that the words of my text were spoken, when Our Lord, on the eve of parting with them, was addressing to His disciples those most precious farewell counsels, contained in the fourteenth and two following chapters of St. John. Adieu is the solemn and tender key-note of those chapters throughout; and in the verse before us the key-note is sounded alone. "Peace be with you," or "Go in peace," was the common form of valediction current in Jewish society, just as "God be with you" (now corrupted into "Good-bye") is in our own. Perhaps it is from the feeling that there is something hollow and purely conventional in "Good-bye,"—that, like a coin whose image and superscription have worn away by constant friction, it now no longer has any religious significance,—perhaps it is for this reason that in our more solemn partings from those in whom we are specially interested, we rather say, "God bless you." A thought not dissimilar to this (so far as we may presume to trace His divine thoughts) gave rise to the solemn words before us. In giving His parting salute to His disciples, Our Lord, who has lived by the wayside of human life throughout His career, who has been mixed up with its cares, and interests, and sorrows, and joys, yea, who has constantly moved in the midst of its conventionalities and sins, though He Himself was the True and the Pure One, will not deviate from the

forms of courtesy commonly in use in His age and among His people. "Peace I leave with you," says He, as the manner was, when friends were parting. Yet He will rescue this good and godly phrase from the insignificance and trite commonplace into which it had sunk, and mint it afresh, and issue it with a new device, and in all the shining radiance of a Gospel Benediction, from the treasury of God. In that disturbed and unsettled state of the nation of Israel, which covers so very large a space of their early history as a people, it is no wonder if Peace were thought the sum and substance of all blessings,—if to wish a man Peace was virtually to wish him prosperity in every form,—to wish that he might sit under his vine and under his fig-tree to a good old age, while his children were as olive branches round about his table. But our Blessed Redeemer gives the valediction quite another turn, takes it out of the circle of worldly prosperity, and makes it reach to the inner man of the heart. "*My* peace," says He, "I give unto you;" "the peace with God which is purchased for you with My Blood, the seat of which is the spirit within, and which no outward reverses can destroy, because they cannot reach it. Moreover, there is another great difference between this valediction, as it is in the world's mouth, and as it is in Mine. The world can at the utmost only *wish* you peace. It is incompetent to do more. A friend, torn for he knows not how long from those in whom he is deeply interested, is no doubt fervent enough in *desiring* for them every blessing. Ah! if he could only *communicate* all the good he wishes, to those whom he is leaving behind, how happy would their lot be! But good wishes are all he has to give. Not so with Me and you, whom I have called My friends. My val-

ediction is not so much votive as effective ; it is not so much a wish as a bestowal. My peace I *give* unto you." With us willing and doing are separate things. The will may exist where the power is absent. But it is not so with God. It is not so with the Lord Jesus, who is God. Their will instantaneously takes effect, even in the far corners of Creation, as it is said, "He spake, and it was done : He commanded, and it stood fast ;" "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in the earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places." Accordingly with them, willing and doing is identical ; and to wish peace, on the part of God or of Christ, is to give peace. "My peace I *give* unto you." What a legacy ! Was ever any such bequeathed before ? "I take of the peace, which exists in the Sacred Heart of My humanity,—the peace which flows from a firm and tranquil confidence in the Father,—and with the arm of My Omnipotence, I reach it down into your hearts, and make you partakers of it."

Now the echoes of this valedictory word of Christ (spoken, you observe, "after supper was ended") we hear in the sentence which concludes our Communion Office : "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God."

But here another passage of Scripture flows into the current of our argument, and lends its aid to show the great appropriateness of these words to the occasion on which they are used.

The former part of the Blessing is only an adaptation of the Divine Promise, made through St. Paul to persons under anxiety, on their fulfilment of a certain condition. The Apostle's words are these : "Be careful for nothing,



but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ."

The peace of God is covenanted by promise to those who refer their wants and wishes to God in Prayer, and mix thanksgiving with the supplication. Now the Holy Communion is the Church's great act of Prayer and Thanksgiving; indeed her *only* public act originally. As things were in quite the primitive days, this was the only distinctively Christian Service. Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Prayer at the various hours, did not come into a separate existence until long afterwards. Indeed, the application of the word Liturgy, or Public Service, to all the Offices of the Church, is comparatively modern; by an ancient Liturgy is meant merely and exclusively an Office for the Communion. The Eucharist then being really the Church's highest act of Prayer, the Service for it is most suitably ended by a reference to that Peace, which God by His Apostle has promised to faithful Prayer.

Only observe that in order to entitle each petitioner, under the terms of the promise, to this peace, the prayer must be real prayer, a true outpouring of the heart with all its felt necessities before God. Let us labour to make our prayers such; and that not only in our private chambers, but at the time of our Communion. This particular Service offers more opportunities of doing so than any other. In Morning and Evening Prayer there is usually no pause, a circumstance which is perhaps to be regretted; for as we are told that Our Lord is specially present among assembled worshippers, devout persons must feel a desire to bring *at that particular time* to the Throne of

Grace all the burdens and cares of which they are privately conscious. But except just at the beginning and end of Morning and Evening Prayer, no time for doing this can be secured. In the Communion it is otherwise. There the time which must necessarily elapse, while others are communicating, offers a good opportunity of referring secretly to God every want and wish of the heart ; or I should rather say, every want and wish which can bear to meet His eye. And every innocent want and wish, even on temporal matters, may freely meet His eye, and ought to be made to do so in compliance with the terms of the precept,—“ *In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*”

Only let it be understood that requests for earthly blessings must be simply presented to God, and not offered unconditionally and irrespectively of our own highest good, and His will and plan for us. The promise, be it observed, is not that the request shall be granted in the form in which it is offered ; but that an inward peace shall, after this reference of the matter to God, still all the uneasy cravings of the heart, and keep the mind fresh and uncantered in the midst of trouble. And this will be, if our minds are kept in the knowledge, and our hearts in the love of God ; that is, if we remain persuaded by faith of His all-sufficiency and willingness to supply our needs, and maintain towards Him that affectionate confidence, which is its own assurance against disappointment. If we look for this from our petitions, and only for this, we may ask what we will, and make known any requests to our Heavenly Father. And thus to ask what we will, to make specific petitions having reference to our own case, to lay down that burden at the Throne,

under which we ourselves secretly groan, will throw into the Service of the Holy Communion a reality and a life, which there can hardly be in any Service, where all through from beginning to end we are required to bend our desires into a rigid framework, prepared beforehand. Excellent as our written forms of Prayer are, and necessary as we conceive them to be for the devout and intelligent conduct of Public Worship, it is no doubt very necessary to watch against formality in the constant use of them, and to ask ourselves now and then with very great seriousness, not only, "How far have I been attentive during this Service?" but the much deeper question, "How far has my heart spoken to God in these Prayers?"

For if a man's prayer (in this or any other Ordinance) be not the utterance of the heart,—if there be no felt want, nor any representation of it to God, but only (at best) the fulfilment of an acknowledged duty, and the satisfaction of conscience thereby, how can such a prayer win the covenanted Peace, the Peace which Christ imparts, the Peace of God which passeth understanding? Observe the result which our Lord Himself points out, as that which must occur in such a case. "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of Peace" (the better reading is, *a* son of Peace) "be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again." This passage lays down a great law of the Kingdom of Heaven, by which all Benedictions issued in that Kingdom are ruled. The Blessing really goes forth in the name, and by the authority of Christ, from the lips of the commissioned messenger. Yet it lights not except on sons of peace,—those whom God's secret Grace has brought into a state

of discipline and preparation for it. The dawn opened its rosy eyelids morning by morning on many a statue besides Memnon's; but none but Memnon's had the chords of music wrought within; and therefore none but Memnon's vibrated melodiously at the touch of the dawn. Or, to use a better and a sacred illustration, the dove which Noah put forth from the ark, flew over the waste of waters, but, finding no rest for the sole of her foot, returned again to him into the ark. And when again he sent her forth, again she returned, and with an Olive Branch in her mouth, a token that now there was at least one spray visible, on which the fowls of the air might alight. The Peace of God resembles that dove. It issues forth in Divine Ordinance, and in this Ordinance more especially, through the ministry of Man. But it by no means rests on every partaker of the Ordinance. It finds out sons of Peace, and nestles in their bosoms. From the rest, from those who have not the elements of Peace within,—who present themselves in the congregation of the righteous, without faith, or fervent desire, or holy longing,—it turns away. The “Holy Dove, the Messenger of rest,” cannot harbour where sin, or hypocrisy, or formality, or worldliness, prevail and reign.

What a lesson is there in this thought of the necessity of a certain congeniality to this Ordinance, if we desire to profit by it! Most true it is that all God's Ordinances, in virtue of their being appointed by Him, have their blessing annexed to them, and going forth from them! They are none of them empty channels, without virtue and efficacy; they are all means of Grace. But it by no means follows hence that the Grace reaches indiscriminately all who attend upon them. As it is with the Word, so it is with all other means of Grace.



The Word lights on some beaten road, where it finds no lodgment at all; on some thorny soil, where it is strangled; on some shallow soil, where it withers away. On the good ground only does it spring up, and bring forth fruit an hundredfold. Then, in the case of this holy Sacrament, do we do our part to train the heart beforehand to the required correspondence? Do we come to the Holy Table with at least a strong appetite for spiritual blessings? Have we that hunger and thirst after righteousness, to which the promise of satisfaction is made? Have we the longing particularly to go forward in the ways of God, and to attain that high degree of spirituality and holiness, to which God has indisputably called all who hear the Gospel, and which some choice souls, under disadvantages, and trials, and temptations certainly not less discouraging than our own, have actually reached? Then doubtless, in proportion to the sincerity and fervour of this desire, we shall find this holy Sacrament to be a real power in the kingdom of God, and shall carry away from it that Peace, which lies at the root of all Christian energy, and which can maintain itself in the face of the greatest outward discomforts and discomposures. What a crown is this Peace to the various emotions which foregoing parts of the Service have called out!





## APPENDIX.

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### A SERMON DIRECTED AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION AND KINDRED ERRORS.

JOHN iv. 49, 50. MATT. viii. 8, 9, 10.

- "The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth."*
- "The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."*
- "For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."*
- "When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."*

THE healing of the nobleman's son, recorded by St. John, reminds us of the cure of the centurion's servant, under circumstances in some respects similar. Both nobleman and centurion were of Capernaum. The son in one case, the servant in the other, was healed by an act of Our Lord's will, operating upon them while they were at a distance from Him. But beyond these two

points, the contrast of the two cases (a contrast which Augustine and others have drawn out in detail) is more remarkable than their resemblance.

One man was a centurion,—a position which may be represented with tolerable accuracy to our minds by calling him a non-commissioned officer of the Roman army. The other was a nobleman, or, as perhaps the word might be rendered, a person engaged in the royal household, a courtier. It is most interesting to observe, in reference to this difference of position, how Our Lord volunteered a visit to the house of the little man (“Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him”); but made no such offer to come under the roof of the great man, nor to move from the place where He then was. Elisha does not stir when an honourable captain comes “with his horses and with his chariot,” and stands at the door of his house; and Christ does not stir when a member of the royal household implores Him to “come down and heal his son.” The messengers of God accept no man’s person. The nobleman’s interest was in a son, and flowed from natural affection. The centurion’s interest was in a servant or slave, and argues him, in the then estimate usually formed of slaves, to have been a man of kindly feeling and general sympathy. It never seems to have crossed the nobleman’s mind that he was unworthy of a visit from Our Lord. The centurion, on the other hand, is quite overwhelmed by the prospect of such an honour: “Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof.” Finally (and this is the point to which I propose this morning to draw your attention), the nobleman seems never to conceive the possibility of Christ’s healing at a distance. If the Lord is to restore his son, He must be under the same roof,

and in the same room with the patient: "Sir, *come down* ere my child die." The centurion, on the other hand, expressly avows his conviction that Christ's Presence is not needed to perform the cure which he solicited. A word, a beck, a nod, a mere signification of the will from a Person possessed of such extraordinary powers will abundantly suffice: "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." And the way in which from the circle of his own experience he reasons himself into this faith is very remarkable. He was familiar with the discipline of a camp or an army, in which the various arrangements and movements are ordered at head-quarters, and executed by subordinates. When this is done on a large scale, there is certainly something very imposing in the authority which the will of a single individual exerts. The centurion would think of the Roman emperor, the commander-in-chief of all the armies of the state, whether in the most distant provinces, or in the neighbourhood of the seat of empire. Let us imagine Tiberius, the then emperor, as he indulged his passion for retirement and vicious pleasures in the secluded island of Capræ, taking a whim that some legion should be removed from one extremity of the empire to another. He need not stir to effect such an arrangement. He speaks a word to his secretary, directing him to make out the order, and send it forthwith to Rome. From Rome it flies by a succession of couriers along those great roads, which, like arteries, traversed the empire in all directions, and are even now the best monuments of Roman civilization, until it reaches its destination. Immediately all is movement and hurry in the camp, striking of tents, and bringing out of wagons, and packing of movables, and in the morning, at the call of the trumpet,

the legion is on its way to the far East, or far West, leaving behind it the mound which formed its rampart, and the trench, to become in future generations a study for the antiquary. Five or six thousand men are swept from one end of the earth to the other by the will of a despot a thousand miles away. "If I now," reasoned the centurion,—“quite a subordinate link in the great chain of military authority,—if even I, by an order to my private soldiers, or my servant, can alter the state of things in the troop under my command without my own personal intervention, cannot this extraordinary Man, who has evidently the powers of nature at His command (for He has stilled the tempest, He has cleansed the leper, He has cast out devils, He has raised the dead), raise up my servant from his bed of languishing, without moving from the spot where He at present is? Therefore, ‘Lord, trouble not Thyself; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.’”

This man's faith, then, was in fact an enlarged conception of the power of Christ,—such a conception as the nobleman wanted, and as Our Lord sought to create in him. In the other great instance of faith commended by Our Lord, the faith stands in an enlarged conception of the *love* of Christ. The Syrophœnician too reasons herself into this faith from the facts of her experience. She had observed that in the great system of God's universe provision is made for the wants of the inferior creatures. Bread is for men, not dogs; but still dogs get some portions of it, the fragments which the master wipes his hands with, and flings down on the floor. If a fragment of good bread is thrown to a dog, may not she, although an outcast of the Gentiles, have a fragment of mercy bestowed upon her? Despite all the apparent un-



graciousness of His answers, she believes that the fragment will be thrown to her, and perseveres in her application.

But to return to the centurion's faith, and the point in which it contrasted with the nobleman's.

The nobleman's faith, then, was poor and narrow, because he conceived the exercise of Our Lord's power to be limited by the condition of His Bodily Presence. The centurion's faith was large and generous, because he reckoned that Our Lord's power to heal was in no way dependent on His Bodily Presence; that He had hosts of subordinate agencies at command in every district of Creation, who would execute His will immediately upon its being signified. This is the faith which Christ commends and approves, yea, which in an heir of sinful flesh and blood He marvels at. We shall attempt to show our own backwardness in this kind of faith, and to reprove ourselves, who have so much clearer light than he had, by the example of this centurion.

First, then, we remark that there is a tendency in the human mind,—a tendency which has made itself only too manifest in the history of the Church, to crave after the bodily visible presence of our Lord. Who can doubt that this tendency is at the bottom of the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation? It is very easy to rail at Transubstantiation in the ordinary coarse way, and to decry the revolting absurdities which seem to be involved in such a tenet. But surely it were better far to consider whether there is not some instinct in the fallen mind of man, which may have prompted this fatal error, and whether we ourselves are not apt to be misled by the same instinct in another form. Putting aside all the subtleties which the wits of Theologians have woven like

so many cobwebs round this dogma, and the hard terms, such as “substance” and “accidents,” in which they have attempted to explain and vindicate it, I take the idea which the tenet conveys to a plain simple-minded Romanist to be exactly this : that usually, and even under the circumstances of ordinary worship, Our Blessed Lord is locally in Heaven, observing us, no doubt, and listening to our prayers; but still at a vast distance from us ; but that on the utterance by the Priest of the words of Consecration He is drawn down into the Church, and lies concealed under the Consecrated Elements, so that the state of things is really just the same as when He visited the Apostles from time to time after the Resurrection, and ate and drank with them, and showed them the wounds in His hands and side. A pious and simple Romanist, who has no head for subtleties, thinks that He pays very similar visits to His Church now, whenever mass is celebrated, and that the elements are merely a disguise, which it pleases Him to wear while making the visit. And, absurd as the tenet is when stated in its bare logical form, there are feelings in the human heart which will explain its being taken up with. Are we quite sure that when reading the Gospels, we ourselves have never longed for the privilege vouchsafed to the Apostles of having our Master with us in Bodily Presence ; of being able to put questions to Him on our difficulties and elicit answers ; of being allowed to look up into the lineaments of His majestic and loving countenance, and see there the very expression which harmonized with the occasion, whether of tenderness, or trouble, or joy, or severity, or simple serene peace ? And has a thought never insinuated itself that the Apostles, whatever their privileges afterwards, were

great losers by the withdrawal of this sort of Presence ; that there was in it a support, and a comfort, and a strength which could not be made up for by what occurred at Pentecost, or, in other words, by a Spiritual Presence? In short, does the state of things represented in the Acts of the Apostles seem to us meagre and unsatisfactory in contrast with that glorious fulness of privilege, which they enjoyed while their Master was with them? It is probable that some such thoughts have at times crossed the minds of all devout persons. There is a certain phase of feeling in which the Lord is regarded as a human friend, association with whom in the flesh would be the greatest of all privileges, if it could be permitted, and would bring us under an influence for good which nothing else could supply. That is probably the feeling which Transubstantiation seems to meet in the mind of those who adopt it, and which, aided by a strong effort of the imaginative faculty, it seems to satisfy. The Lord is supposed to be among His people as heretofore,—to occupy a certain space upon earth, to the exclusion of all other parts of space,—as heretofore (although in a great mystery), to be the subject of sight and touch.

2. But how emphatically corrected and reproved by Scripture, is the sentiment which I have described! Nothing can be clearer on the surface of the narrative than that the spiritual state of the Apostles after Pentecost was far higher, far more blessed, yea, one of far more intimate communion with the Lord than it had been previously. Whence the immense increase of light, of joy, of power, contrasted with the ignorance and imbecility of their former state, if not from the fact that they were now one with their great Head, by the indwelling of His Spirit, in a manner in which they had never

before been one? Their relation to Him was altered; and the latter relation was far closer, and so far more excellent and desirable, than the former had been. He begins to teach them this immediately after His Resurrection. When an attempt is made by one of His most devoted followers to spring towards Him with the old ardour of human affection, He withdraws Himself from the bodily handling as that which was now to find place no longer, and the mysterious words fall from His lips: "Touch me not." Not that His heart of love to His followers had been in the smallest degree chilled by the great ordeal through which He had passed; not that His change of circumstances had rendered him in the least degree cold and distant, or made Him push those to arm's length whom He had once delighted to gather round Him in the familiarities of friendly intercourse; but that by this first significant word He would have them understand that it was not any longer by the senses that they were to touch Him and have intercourse with Him, but by the spiritual faculty of faith. In short, He would initiate them into the new relationship, and teach them that they must now no longer know Him as they once had known Him, "after the flesh," must seek Him no more locally, but in prayer, speak to Him by lifting up their hearts, draw down His Power to their relief by communicating with Him invisibly through hope and trust. But alas! the natural and corrupt heart of man is not really satisfied with that spiritual Presence of Christ, which has superseded His bodily and visible Presence. We like walking by sight much better than walking by faith; and liking this naturally, we imagine to ourselves a local presence of Christ upon earth in one particular spot, and under a particular form of matter, even when



such an imagination involves the greatest absurdities. The same feeling would have led us, had we lived in the time recorded by the Acts of the Apostles, to go back again in fond yearnings of memory to the time when our Master still walked visibly among men, and to pour forth sentimental regrets on the intercourse once vouchsafed, but which had now been withdrawn. But do the Apostles themselves ever manifest such yearnings or regrets? Is it not altogether the contrary? Do not cheerful activity, vigour, boldness, and a joyous assurance of their Master's support, characterize all their proceedings after Pentecost; whereas before they are feeble, dull, timid and sorrowful? After all, the mere support to be derived from the Bodily Presence of one wiser and better than ourselves,—what does it amount to? There is a good deal of our lower nature in such support, but little of the higher. An animal may be bold when his master is close to him, cheering him on to the attack, or docile when the human eye is fixed steadily upon him, and exerts a kind of spell in subduing resistance. But it is the glory of man that he has a faculty which enables him to throw himself upon and realize the support of an unseen God,—a faculty which gives him a moral support, such as derives no aid from the senses. True it is that God has condescended to that infirmity of our nature by which we demand a visible object of worship, by sending His Son into the world to reveal His Name and Nature. But a definite apprehension of God having thus been established in the minds of men—a great object of Faith, level to our understanding and sympathies, having been once for all displayed,—this object is withdrawn again into the Invisible World, in order that our faith may



have scope to exercise itself. If Christ were under our eyes, what trial of faith would there be in believing?

But let us rather ask with the centurion, what could the Bodily Presence of Christ under our roofs, in our Churches, do for us, which He is at present unable to do? "The Natural Body of our Saviour Christ," says our Prayer Book, "is in Heaven and not here." And Heaven is the great Presence Chamber of God beyond the stars, distant we know not how far from our globe. But what of that? "I am persuaded that neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This earth is but a remote corner of God's Universe,—an extremity of the great system, in whose centre sits enthroned the Son of God, in His risen and glorified Humanity. But to Him, as He has Himself assured us, is given "all power in Heaven and in earth." His will permeates all space with a speed greater than that of the electric spark. He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and it stands fast. By His Word He is present in every district of Creation, upholding, informing, controlling all things. What though Suns and systems of worlds roll between us and His glorified Body, do we think He cannot reach us? Are we not told that "Angels, and authorities, and powers are made subject unto Him"? Has He no subordinate ministers, who can execute His behests on the moment that His will is signified to them? Is not the Holy Spirit a mysterious link between us and Him, knitting us as close to Him as the body, by the possession of life, is knit to the soul? If He is the centre of life and influence to us, as the soul is to the body, can there be any closer union with Him? Is not this more than enough to

satisfy all the longings of the spiritual mind? And do we imagine that He cannot hear us at so great a distance? O unworthy thought! Who shall tell the speed with which Prayer travels to His ear, or rather to His heart? Who shall tell how instantaneously the upward glance of an eye directed towards Him, the breath of a single devout aspiration, reaches His Presence Chamber? We must enlarge our views of His Power and His omniscience, if we desire that our faith, like the centurion's, should be commended by Him. "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? . . . . Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." We must dismiss all notions of Him which would reduce Him again under the limited conditions, which it pleased Him once to assume, of an earthly body and a natural relationship. Let us regard Him as the King of Heaven, whose fiat takes effect immediately upon earth. Let us learn to see in all events, arrangements, movements of this shifting scene, whether great or small, of public or private concernment, the execution of His will. Let us think of Him as everywhere present by His Word. And let us find Him in our own hearts by the motions and instigations of His Spirit, nearer to our true personality, nearer to our consciousness and inner man, than even the most confidential friend can ever be. There let us hold communion with Him. There let us seek His face, and speak to Him, and take counsel with Him, and listen to His replies. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and

in thy heart." Prayer is in the mouth of the Christian. Christ (by the Spirit) is in his heart. Verily He is not far from every one of us. He is a God nigh at hand, and access to Him easy.

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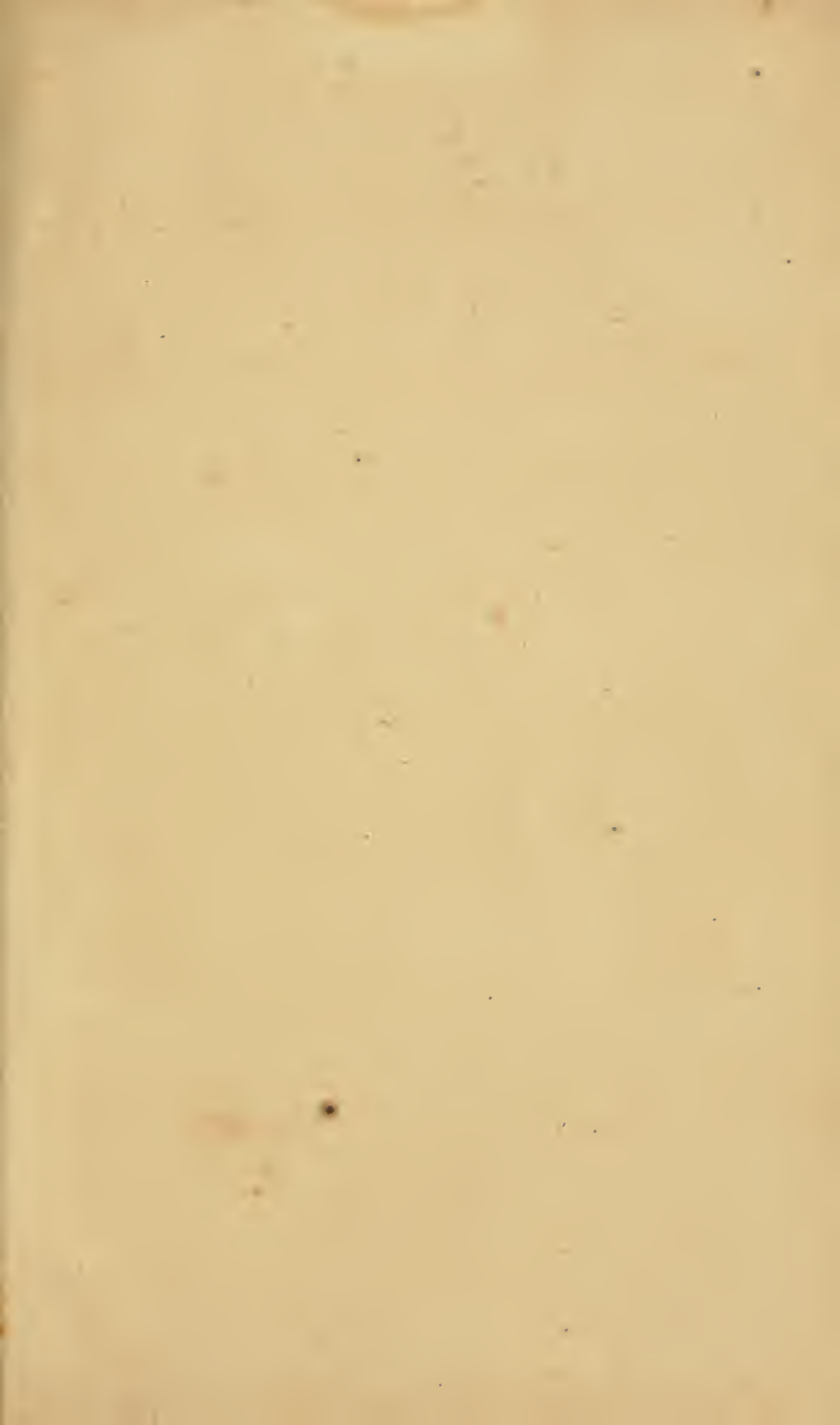
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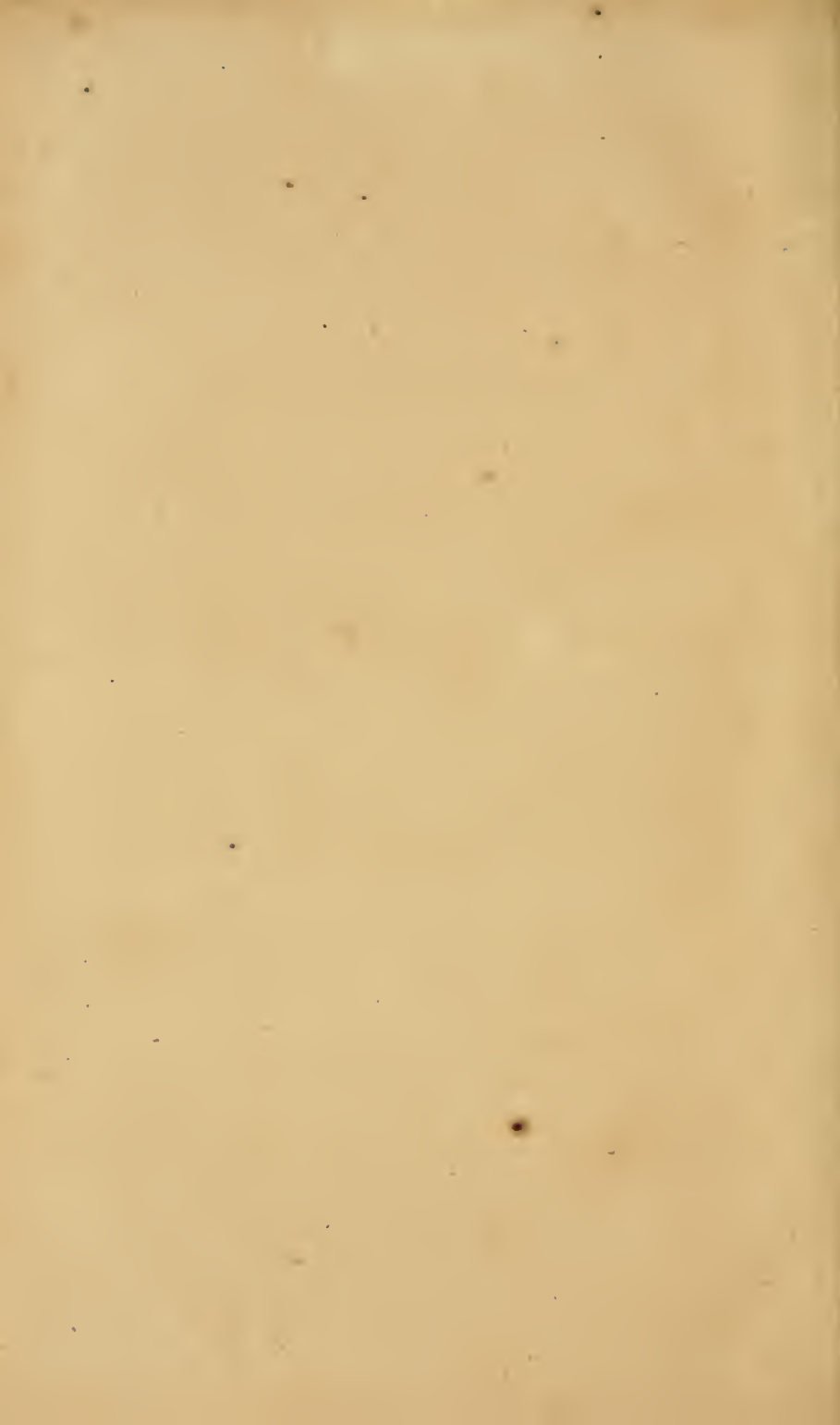
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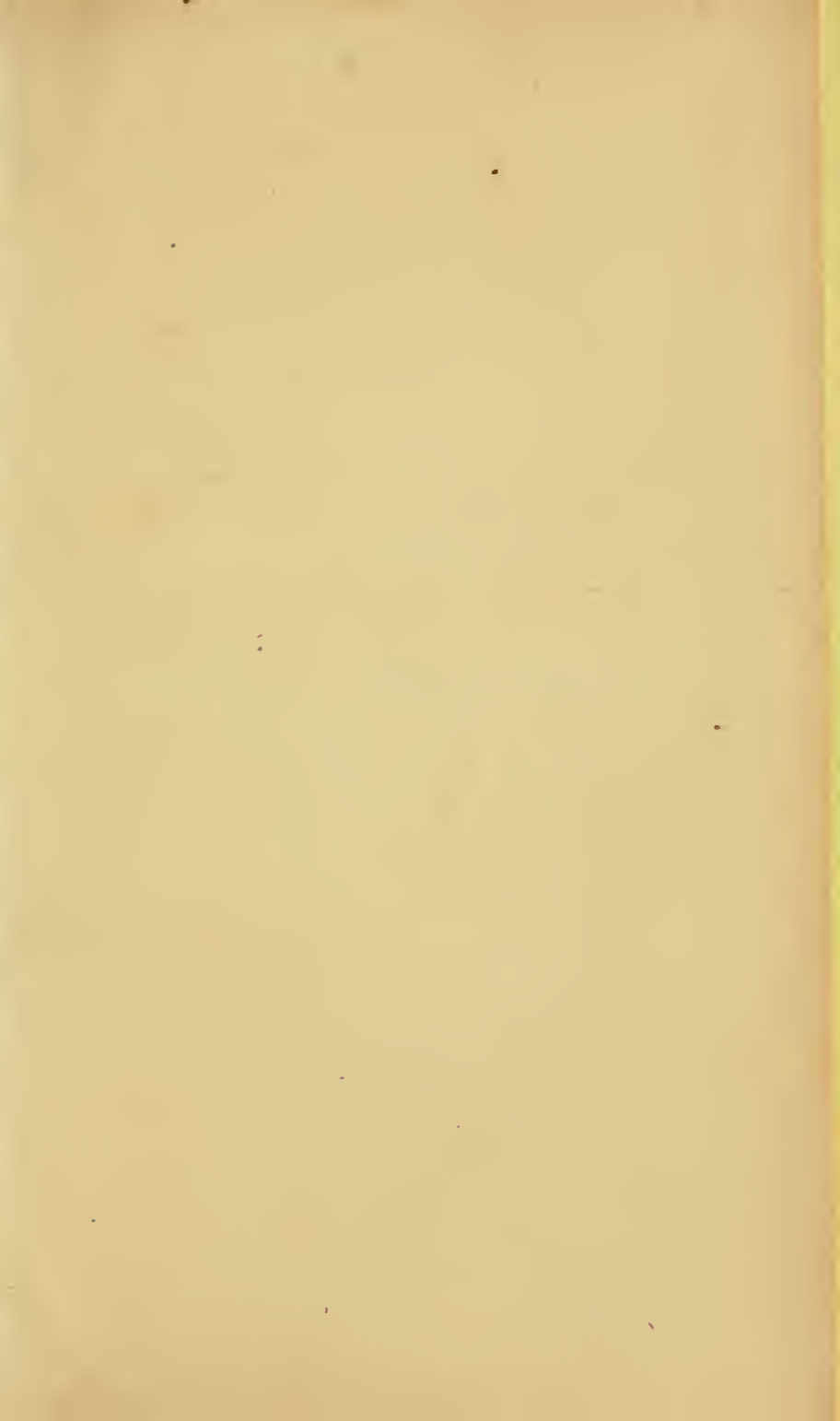
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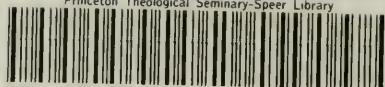




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